

MEMOIR OF
H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER



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The Right Honourable

Hugh Oakeley Arnold-Forster





Hugh Crokeley Arnold-Forster, 1905.

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1910

Arnold-Forster, Mary (Story - Mabelyn)

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

HUGH OAKELEY ARNOLD-FORSTER

A MEMOIR

BY

HIS WIFE

'Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant.
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet !'

Sir T. WYATT.

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LONDON

EDWARD ARNOLD

1910

AIRBORNE TO VINH
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TO OUR SISTER
FLORENCE
AND TO OUR SONS
WILLIAM, MERVYN, JOHN, AND CHRISTOPHER

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PREFACE

WHETHER it be true that the story of a man's life should not be written for some twenty or thirty years after his death, or whether, on the other hand, it should be told whilst, in the minds of his friends and fellow-workers, his memory is still fresh and undimmed, is a question difficult to decide. But if a memoir may ever be written after no long delay, it is perhaps specially permissible in the case of one whose life was wholly given to the study of the greatest national problems that have still to be faced and solved by his fellow-countrymen. To the study and understanding of the questions that are most vital to us as a nation and as an empire, my husband devoted a life of strenuous work. He approached these questions from the point of view of one who was to the end a student, and who was always learning. He brought to their solution a great sincerity of purpose, wholly untouched by any thought of self or of his own advantage.

He had, to use Mr. Balfour's words describing him, "a single eye to the great national needs which are now filling so much of our thoughts." In this characteristic he resembled, very closely, his adopted father, William Edward Forster, to whose training and example he owed so much.

"His patriotism," wrote Mr. Garvin, "was as a religion which possessed him from head to foot. He was a pioneer of all the imperial causes through their darkest days. No man knew more about public affairs as a whole. Above

all, no man cared more. . . . He worked 'as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye' until he wore himself out. Of him it may be as truly said as of any man who fell upon the field that he lived and died for England."

It is possible that in a few years' time our national needs may have changed in character, and that fresh problems will be ours to solve; but, at the present moment, our destiny as a nation seems likely to depend greatly upon our capacity to organise and co-ordinate the general resources of the empire; and, above all, on our power to devise a system of defence and offence that shall be suited to its peculiar needs. It was to these questions, and to others of a similar nature, that my husband gave the best years and work of his life.

The months that have passed since his death have not lightened, but have gravely increased our national anxieties; and to arrive at a right understanding of these difficult questions on which the fate of our country depends, becomes more and more the duty of every citizen. That the studies and labour of his life might be of use to his fellow-countrymen would have been the reward that of all others he would most have desired.

These reasons have had great weight in the decision to write and publish this memoir at the present time; although by taking this course many omissions are necessitated, which render the story of his public life and of his administration of the War Office a less complete record than it would otherwise be.

No one can be more deeply conscious than I am of the many omissions and the imperfections of this memoir. To write without professional knowledge of the technical matters that must be spoken of in its pages is to be at a grave disadvantage; and I feel a great anxiety lest, being without such knowledge, I may have fallen into error, and represented imperfectly or inaccurately the views of one

whose work was characterised by an extreme and notable accuracy.

It is not an easy task to write the story of a life, into whose comparatively short space so large an amount of public work and so many varied interests were gathered, the materials for which are so abundant; or to concentrate the history of so much work and thought into the pages of a single volume. On the question of the measure and proportion of such a memoir my husband had himself so clear a view that by his own feeling on the subject I have felt myself bound. He pleaded often for shorter memoirs, limited to the size of some of the "Lives" written in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. If in these pages some of the friendships that he deeply valued, and some of the questions that interested him, are hardly alluded to, or are wholly passed over, the limitation of space must be remembered in excuse.

I have to thank many of my husband's friends for their help and counsel, and for permission to use the letters that are given here.

To Major Marker my most special thanks are due for invaluable help given to me in the chapters dealing with Army affairs,—help that was most freely given, in memory of a great friendship. To Mr. Arthur Loring, my husband's lifelong friend; to his sisters Mrs. Vere O'Brien and Miss Frances Arnold-Forster; and to our sons, without whose help and constant sympathy this book could not have been written, I owe my most grateful thanks.

MARY ARNOLD-FORSTER.

BASSET DOWN, WROUGHTON, WILTS,

October 1910.

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ERRATUM

Page 117, lines 9-11 *should read* “. . . to an end ; and the position became still further complicated when Mr. Rhodes, the General Manager of the Chartered Company, became Premier of Cape Colony as well.”



THE RIGHT HONOURABLE HUGH OAKELEY ARNOLD-FORSTER

CHAPTER I

“ And through thee I believe
In the noble and great who are gone ;

Souls tempered with fire,
Fervent, heroic, and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.”

MATTHEW ARNOLD : “ Rugby Chapel.”

The Arnold Family—Dr. Arnold of Rugby—Childhood in India—Days of the Mutiny—Wharfeside—Mrs. W. E. Forster—Letters from her brother, Matthew Arnold—W. E. Forster—His Career—His Friendship with Carlyle—His Public Life.

HUGH OAKELEY ARNOLD-FORSTER, the second son of William Delafield Arnold, and grandson of Thomas Arnold, Headmaster of Rugby, was born on August 19, 1855. Dr. Arnold, who was born in the Isle of Wight, came of Suffolk ancestry on his father's side, Arnolds being established near Lowestoft before the sixteenth century ; whilst his mother belonged to the Delafield family. Dr. Arnold's wife, Mary Penrose, came of a race which, as her descendants love to remember, has given distinguished sons to the Navy. She was the grand-daughter of John Penrose, Vicar of Gluvias in Cornwall, and his wife, Elizabeth Vinicombe, a descendant of the Devonshire families of Ford and Chudleigh. Their son, Admiral Sir Charles Penrose, Vice-Admiral of the White, had a long and distinguished naval career ; serving throughout the great war, and afterwards on the French coast, in the Mediterranean, and in the Ionian islands. His elder brother, a second John Penrose, became

vicar of Fledborough in Nottinghamshire, and married Jane Trevenen of Rosewarne in Cornwall. His character was thus described by one who knew him: "If a man walks with a Divine spirit those who know its effects will be able to trace its presence. It is a rare thing to find those who so walk with the spirit, but those among us who have been privileged to hold intercourse with such persons, will remember that they were affected by them almost unconsciously. . . . They seemed to have an ever-present feeling of what is right and true and lovely." These words written of John Penrose would, with equal truth, describe his daughter Mary, afterwards Mary Arnold, who was born at Fledborough Vicarage in 1791.

Of Dr. Arnold and Mary Arnold, his wife, much has been written. By a rare fortune his life has been made known to succeeding generations by a biography of singular beauty and power. A vivid impression of the personality and teaching of the great Headmaster of Rugby has been preserved for us throughout the seventy years that have passed since his death in the pages of Dean Stanley's memoir, which have kept fresh and unfaded the picture of this strong man, born to be a teacher and leader of men, who in his comparatively short life made a mark so deep and enduring on his generation, and actually did so much to change and reform the whole spirit of our public schools. Perhaps one quality of his mind that strikes us forcibly, if we read afresh the letters of Arnold, is the modern nature of his thought and expression. The impression is strong as we read these letters written in the "twenties" and "thirties" of the last century, that they are written by some statesman of our own generation; and that the social and political problems that face the men and women of to-day are the actual problems and difficulties that he faces with such an eager sympathy and understanding, and with a Liberalism so sane and so finely tempered. It was by virtue of great qualities, and an intensity and ardour of spirit that would have made him great in any sphere, that he was a great teacher. Consequently, as was well said of him by another Headmaster of Rugby:¹ "His real position is not so much

¹ Dr. Perceval, Bishop of Hereford.

that of a schoolmaster as of a prophet among schoolmasters, a man whose special mission it was to unveil and interpret the higher possibilities, responsibilities, and duties of the schoolmaster's life. Through the intensity of his moral and spiritual feeling and his 'radiant vigour,' he vitalised ideas of which weaker men had been but dimly conscious, or which they had merely carried about with them as inert or pious opinions. Thus the value of his example is to be sought in his unconventional attitude of mind, his striving for reality, his high moral aim, his intense religious purpose. In a word it is that influence of the prophet which is the salt of society in every age."

The pilgrims who cross the Atlantic year by year to visit the homes and shrines of "the noble and great who are gone" whose names they honour, come still in never-failing numbers to Fox How, which holds, linked together, the double memories of Thomas Arnold, and of Matthew Arnold, his son.

Dr. Arnold was forty-seven years old when he died at Rugby in 1842, leaving his five sons and four young daughters to be brought up at Fox How under their mother's care.

These were : Matthew his eldest son, the poet.

Thomas, his second son,—whose beautiful sensitive face reflected the unworldliness and purity of his mind, the friend both of Clough and of Newman,—has given a brief autobiography of himself in his *Passages from a Wandering Life*. His later years were given to work in the Royal University of Dublin.

Edward, one of H.M. principal Inspectors of Schools. A man highly gifted, and remembered with undying love by two generations of friends.

William Delafield, soldier and Indian administrator.

Walter, who served in the Royal Navy and became later a member of "Lloyds."

Of Dr. Arnold's four daughters, Jane, Mary, Susannah, and Frances ; the eldest, Jane—her brother Matthew's early correspondent, the "Fausta" of his poems—became the wife of William Forster.

The house at Fox How, built by Dr. Arnold, lies in

the Westmorland Lake country, in Wordsworth's loved valley of the Rotha. It is reached by the winding road from Ambleside to Rydal, which, following the course of the Rotha, skirts round the base of Loughrigg, the beautiful mountain within whose sheltering arm the valley lies. The road passes by river and fields, and through a little wood whose tall trees shade the grey stone gabled house. Its windows look across a bright space of garden, down the valley, and into the very heart of Fairfield. A scene more lovely with the intimate charm and loveliness of Westmorland it would be difficult to find. The circle at Fox How, and Fox How itself, must needs be spoken of in telling the story of any descendant of the Arnold family; for during their beloved grandmother's life, and later under the gracious rule of their Aunt Fan (Miss Frances Arnold), it has remained a place of hallowed memories, strong in its influence over the lives and thoughts of the children whose happy lot it was to grow up familiar with its spirit and traditions. Some places seem to acquire an actual personality of their own, so strong are the associations entwined about them. It is a good fortune for any child to have among those early impressions which are never lost, impressions so unworldly, so high and pure as those inspired by such a home as Fox How.

"There is no place in the world," wrote Oakeley Arnold-Forster a few months before his death, "which is so full of associations and happy associations as Fox How. Every room and every path is haunted by bright and happy ghosts, whom I can see almost as plainly as if they were before me in the flesh. I see them with a clearness of vision which is quite startling. I know exactly what they all wore, where they all sat or stood, which chair in the drawing-room, which place at the dinner-table, was appropriate to each of them. I remember the sound of their voices; I can see them smile. But all these vivid memories, precious as they are, are of less value to me than my recollection of the whole tone and temper of that wonderful society, so good, so brilliant, so affectionate, so complete in all good gifts.

"The being here and thinking of these things does not make me sad, not even when I look as I did on Sunday on the

tablets in Rydal Church, so nearly full, or as I did yesterday on the graves of our dear people in Ambleside Churchyard. The memories which these things bring to me move me greatly, but they do not sadden me. You know, as I know, that there never were people more capable of living the best and fullest life on earth, and yet more fit to leave it whenever their call came. For them I cannot and do not grieve; I press home my recollections without fear, they do not distress me, though they all bring back the thought of the treasures we have lost. . . . How much I wish that my boys could in their turn have had at least the opportunity of seeing what great lives can be . . . that they could have seen and felt the influence of the life which was lived here by the generation which has now so nearly gone. My dear F., I could go on writing to you for ever about this place.

"You would understand me when I told you that I ought not to be writing in this dining-room at all. Uncle Edward or Uncle Matt ought to be sitting in this window surrounded by papers, and protected from interruption by a mysterious code which admitted of no infraction. When I go into the drawing-room I am quite prepared to see the door open and Uncle Edward appear, his boots just spotted with the grey gravel from the front court, his black shiny spring gaiters showing below his dark Inverness cape, and his soft hat (not the hard tall one of Sundays) still on his head for the moment. He smiles, his wonderful blue eyes twinkle as he asks if some one is not going to walk to Ambleside.

"Then in the corner of the sofa it ought not to be me, almost the youngest and almost the smallest of the whole party. It ought to be Grandmama with her soft face and her little red shawl; or later that beloved mother of ours, in those days before the sad look came to her, when she was still as active and vigorous in body, as to the day of her death she was in mind and spirit. Even in that great company how immeasurably superior she was to all others.

"And then all the others—I can place every one of them, and so can you—Father, Aunt Fanny Lucy, Uncle John (never to be forgotten), Aunt Susy, Uncle Walter, Aunt Mala, Mr. James Cropper, the happy and favourite

guest with his beautiful face. And all the younger generation. . . .

"I was looking at Mr. Tatham's portrait last night, an odd, round, rough man, who is still to me the only legitimate occupant of the pulpit at Rydal. But, alas, there is no pulpit now—at least no real one; and the chosen corner of the Fox How pew, where under Banks' desk the very young could escape the observation of the grown-ups, exists no more. But I know where it is, and though no one else was aware of the fact I was in it last Sunday.

"But, as I say, dear, I could go on for ever and you would understand; but conditions of time and space interpose limits, and I have said quite enough to make you understand how marked an event is this visit to me."¹

This description of Fox How, and its influence on a younger generation, is given in full because it seems to tell so much both of Fox How itself, and also of the writer of the letter.

Oakeley's father, William Delafield Arnold, was only fourteen years old when Dr. Arnold died. From Rugby school he went to Christ Church, Oxford, and thence passed into the Indian Army, serving in the 58th Regiment, B.N.I. A curious and vivid picture of life in the army as he saw it is given in his remarkable book *Oakfield, or Fellowship in the East*, a novel which, written as it was by a very young man, shows much of the character and ability of the writer. It tells the story of a young officer of Arnold's own type, earnest and fearless as he was himself, brought into contact with Anglo-Indian society in a native infantry regiment at the time of the Sikh War. Written as *Oakfield* was, shortly before the events of the Mutiny, there is a special interest in the warning note that it strikes, and in the grave reminder to England that, whatever the history of India and our future there may be, they must and will depend upon the actions and character of the Englishmen in India.

"There was a great charm and nobility in my brother Willy's character," wrote his sister, Mrs. W. E. Forster,

¹ A letter written in October 1908 to his beloved sister, friend, and correspondent, Florence Vere O'Brien.

"combined with remarkable energy and ardour and something of youthful vehemence." And in one of his brother Matthew Arnold's most beautiful poems, "A Southern Night," the same impression of youthfulness, gallant and lovable, is conveyed.

"Is this the eye, the footstep fast,
The mien of youth we used to see,
Poor, gallant boy!—for such thou wast,
Still art, to me.

That comely face, that clustered brow,
That cordial hand, that bearing free,
I see them still, I see them now,
Shall always see!"

Foremost among the group of friends whom he drew round him in India, which included Sir Donald Stewart, Sir Henry Lawrence, Sir Allen Johnson, Colonel Pearson, Charles Saunders, and Sir Charles Oakeley, was Sir John Lawrence; and with him Arnold became closely and intimately allied in friendship.

It was in the house of John Lawrence that his marriage took place in 1850 to Frances, daughter of General Hodgson. John Anthony Hodgson, whose career in India had begun in the Bengal Light Infantry, may be remembered as having been the earliest successful explorer of the sources of the Ganges and Jumna. He afterwards became Surveyor-General of India. Of his daughter Frances, Oakeley's mother, a charming description is given in a letter written by the wife of Sir Henry Lawrence to Mrs. Arnold of Fox How. "Your son might have searched India through," she says, "and not found another girl of Miss Hodgson's stamp, and this I say after months of almost daily intercourse with her."

Three years after their marriage William Arnold was obliged, on account of ill-health, to take a long leave of absence, and he brought his wife and eldest child home. It was during this prolonged stay in England that Hugh Oakeley, the subject of this memoir, was born in 1855 at Dawlish in Devonshire. When he was four months old the parents returned to India, taking with them their three little children—Edward, Florence, and Oakeley.

William Arnold's great opportunity of service had now

come. One of "John Lawrence's men," tried and trusted, he was called on by his chief to undertake a work, new indeed to him and arduous, but congenial, and full of importance to the great province of which Lawrence was the ruler. Arnold became Director of Public Instruction in the Punjaub, and it fell to his lot to organise for the first time a system of public instruction and education for the whole province.

He and his wife made their home at Dharmsala. In the terrible year of the Mutiny, and the anxious and harassing months that followed it, Arnold had continually to leave her and his children in their home in the hills, whilst he travelled from place to place carrying out his arduous duties, and carrying them out so well that to this day a gold medal, struck in honour of his memory, commemorates the work that he did so faithfully. This medal, three of which in gold and silver are still given year by year to the best scholars in the schools which he founded in the Punjaub, is thus described by one who knew him well: "It bears on its obverse his likeness in relief, beautifully carved, and conveying the precise impression which so fascinated his friends—a kind of sweet stateliness in accord with the whole tone of his mind." At Dharmsala, in August 1857, their youngest child Frances was born, and in the March following the children's beloved mother died, in the house of friends, in the hill station of Kangra, before her husband, who was absent on one of his long tours of inspection, could reach her side.

The earliest memories that Oakeley could recall were of Dharmsala, of bright scarlet rhododendrons there, and of the *Khud*, an abyss down which children's playthings could be thrown; memories of tents lighted by a wick floating in a tumbler of ghee; of "*dhurzis* who sat mending our clothes in the verandah," and of "men who beat wool with sticks like drumsticks."

In 1859 the four children were sent home to England, their father bringing them down from Kangra to Calcutta. Many incidents on that journey through India impressed themselves indelibly on the mind of the three-year-old Oakeley. Of Cawnpore he told me, "We were driving with

Papa in a buggy, a very light sort of gig, when we passed what I was told was the 'Well of Cawnpore'—I have had a perfectly clear and distinct memory of it ever since and of what it was like, but it was quite unlike any well or any picture of it that I have ever seen; for what I saw was a mound of earth and a square of white planking covering it in, and railings all round enclosing it." "And long afterwards," he said, "when I described to Lord Roberts just what I remembered at Cawnpore, he said, 'Yes, that was what it was like then'"—the well of the terrible tragedy had been cleared out and covered over with temporary planking, and a railing put round it shutting it in. "I recollect," he went on, "that in Delhi where we stayed with the Saunders's, there were windows with no glass in them, and Edward told us that they had been destroyed in the siege." Some shadows of the dreadful years through which this country was passing were reflected in these memories of a little child. "I knew," he said, "that there was some crisis going on, that there was fighting, and that men were being killed, and when we saw a show of marionettes who fired toy guns I wondered dimly if they were not real and were not part of the fighting that we were told of." He saw and remembered the lines of native troops drawn up for the review at Lahore, when the historic proclamation was made of the assumption of the Government of India by the Queen of England; the proclamation which ended the long and eventful rule of the East India Company, which sealed the unity of Indian Government, and with which a new era for India opened.

The children's journey home was made in the s.s. *Calcutta*. William Arnold saw them safely embarked at Calcutta. In March he himself started for home, travelling by the shorter Suez route, intending to meet his little ones in England. Worn out and broken by the deep sorrows and anxieties of the past years in India, he fell mortally ill before the journey ended, and was landed at Gibraltar, to die there on April 9, 1859, at the early age of thirty-one.

In "A Southern Night," and in "Stanzas from Carnac" Matthew Arnold tells the story of this much-loved brother's journey and death.

"Ah! where is he, who should have come
Where that far sail is passing now,
Past the Loire's mouth, and by the foam
Of Finistère's unquiet brow,

Home, round into the English wave?
—He tarries where the Rock of Spain
Mediterranean waters lave;
He enters not the Atlantic main.

Oh, could he once have reached this air
Freshen'd by plunging tides, by showers!
Have felt this breath he loved, of fair
Cool northern fields, and grass, and flowers!

He long'd for it—press'd on.—In vain!
At the Straits fail'd that spirit brave.
The south was parent of his pain,
The south is mistress of his grave."

That grave, long afterwards visited by his children and grandchildren, stands under the shadow of the great north front of the Rock, where it is tended by reverent hands, and where the climbing rose geranium blossoms over it year by year.

"William Arnold," wrote his friend, Meredith Townsend, "did not live long enough to gain his true place in the world, but he had time enough given him to make himself important to a government like that of Lord Dalhousie, to mould the education of a great province, and to win the enduring love of all with whom he came in contact."

His children made their long journey home round the Cape, their ship bringing home many sick and wounded soldiers invalided home after the Mutiny. Long afterwards, when Oakeley went out to South Africa and was landing at Cape Town, he told how clear was his recollection of the *Calcutta* coming to anchor in Table Bay, and of a gun fired on shore, which it seemed to the children must be the firing of the enemy.

They were met at Gravesend by Mrs. Forster, William Arnold's eldest sister, and were taken by her to Wharfeside, William Forster's home in Yorkshire; where William and Jane Forster became henceforward father and mother to the orphaned children, and where they grew up in the tenderest atmosphere of love and care.



OAKELEY, EDWARD AND FLORENCE ARNOLD, 1860.

The house at Wharfeside to which the children came, was added to as they grew older, to meet their needs. A pleasant, deep-eaved, gabled house, it stands among tall beech trees and shrubberies, looking across to distant moors, over the shining stretch of river, where the Wharfe at its broadest winds among ash trees and meadows. Many were the changes and additions made to the modest house which was first built by Mr. and Mrs. Forster when they left their earlier home at Rawdon.

"To the four children who came from India to their home on the Wharfe," wrote Oakeley's sister, Florence Vere O'Brien, "to the ivy-covered house, embosomed in trees, standing in a garden, bright with flowers and smooth-shaven lawns; the original Wharfeside, as it was described to them, seemed as difficult to picture in imagination as the marshes of Westminster before London was built. From first to last the real core and nucleus of Wharfeside, the centre round which everything seemed to have formed, was the library. This room was the connecting-link between my father's¹ old surroundings and his new; for its exact proportions and size, the low raftered ceiling, the dark mahogany bookcases that lined the walls, were copied, or had been transported bodily from his library at Rawdon. And the heavy red velvet curtains, drawn every night across the wide window that filled up nearly the whole of one wall, were a purchase of his bachelor days, of which he was not unreasonably proud. This library was *the* room of the house. Wharfeside never possessed a drawing-room, properly so called. From the first it was in the library that my mother's sofa, her writing-table, her flowers and books were established, and this room was the scene of that active joint life, that perfect companionship in all their plans, occupations, and interests, which began with those early years of quiet work at Wharfeside. In later times the library was still the family room, as might have been seen by the various tokens of feminine, not to say juvenile, occupations intruding amongst the piles of newspapers, the letters, Blue-

¹ The children were taught to call their adopted parents by the name of "Father" and "Mother," and hereafter, when these names are used, they refer to Mr. and Mrs. Forster.

books, and despatch boxes, which might well have claimed a monopoly of right to the limited space available in the small library, the work-room of a busy public man. "But so long as the sanctity of his writing-table was respected, my father would cheerfully tolerate this joint occupation of what might naturally have been considered his special room, and the pleasant, book-lined library, with its outlook over river and meadow and distant moor," was still the common resort of the family."

Like the home at Fox How from which Mrs. Forster had come, the house at Wharfeside impressed those who saw it with its great simplicity. It had no modern or artistic furnishings, the bedrooms looked rather austere plain with their dimity hangings and severe engravings; but the presence of books, in every part of the house where books could possibly find a place, and many pictures on the walls, made it a very individual and a very homelike house. Of those who built Wharfeside and made it what it was, it is difficult to give any description which shall convey the impression of their personality, or explain the influence they exerted on their own and a succeeding generation.

Mr. Yarnall, an American writer, who wrote a pleasant book on Wordsworth and the Coleridges, says:—

"What a vision it is for my memory, that pretty house at Wharfeside, where I first came to know William and Jane Forster. Never was there a closer intellectual companionship than theirs; each, as it were, supplementing the other; his rugged strength, his quick mind, his wide knowledge of books, of men, and affairs. Her keen intelligence, her grace of manner, her sweet dignity, her tenderness of feeling."

And elsewhere the same writer quotes William Wordsworth's charming saying about her, that "in all that went to make up excellence in women he thought Jane Arnold was the finest example he knew."

There are few people now who can remember Mrs. Forster in those early days when Mr. Yarnall first saw her—"a young lady, of slight and graceful figure . . . in whom intelligence, refinement, high and pure thought met together with all feminine charm." There are more friends who will remember her in her later days, when her face and figure were worn, and seemed of an almost extreme delicacy and

fragility, though the beautiful brow was shaded by hair that even to the day of her death was still dark and waving. They remember her slender figure seated on the little sofa, or on her small low chair, drawn up near the fire at Wharfeside; her eyes, sensitive always to extremes of heat and of light, shaded by screen or fan from the firelight, or from the afternoon sunshine as it streamed in through the big window into the library.

Her manner, to which a slight, natural shyness or reserve gave a little formality at first with strangers, was gracious and full of charm, especially when the guest she was talking to was young, or needed himself to be set at ease. Some of the most interesting of Matthew Arnold's letters were written to his beloved "K," as he called this sister, to whose critical judgment he turned for finest criticism, and for truest sympathy. Only a brief quotation from one or two of these letters can be given here:—

"MY DARLING K—I seem to want to see *you* and be with *you* more than any one when my poems are making their way, or beginning to make it. You were my first hearer—you dear K,—and such a sympathising, dear, animating hearer too."¹

"LONDON, *Tuesday Morning, April 1856.*

"Many thanks, my dearest K, for your extracts. My poems are making their way, I think, though slowly, and perhaps never to make way very far. There must always be some people, however, to whom the literalness and sincerity of them has a charm. After all, that American review which hit upon this last—their sincerity—as their most interesting quality, was not far wrong. It seems to me strange sometimes to hear of people taking pleasure in this or that poem which was written years ago, which then nobody took pleasure in but you, which I then perhaps wondered that nobody took pleasure in, but since had made up my mind that nobody was likely to. The fact is, however, that the state of mind expressed in many of the poems is becoming more common, and you see that even the Obermann stanzas are taken up with interest by some."

¹ This letter is undated, but was marked in pencil by Mrs. Forster, "1853?"

In a letter to Mrs. Forster, written in 1859, he writes :—

"MY DEAREST K—. . . I could talk to you a great deal more about the pamphlet¹ . . . but I have not time to go beyond this sheet. You and Clough are, I believe, the two people I, in my heart, care most to please by what I write. Clough (for a wonder) is this time satisfied, even delighted. 'With one or two insignificant exceptions,' he says, 'I believe all you say is probably right, and if right, most important for English people to consider.' . . . 'The worst of the English is that on foreign politics they search so very much more for what they like and wish to be true, than for what *is* true. In Paris there is certainly a larger body of people than in London who treat foreign politics as a science, as a matter to *know* upon before *feeling* upon. . . .' Tell William I should be very glad if he could find out how either Bright or Cobden liked my pamphlet. . . . They are both well worth convincing. Send Gladstone's note on to Fox How, and with love to William and kisses to the dear children, believe me, my dearest K, your ever affectionate M. A."

Mrs. Forster's own great gift of writing was known to a very small circle of her family and friends. To the brothers, sisters, and children, of whom she was the constant correspondent, her power of literary expression was known to be no less remarkable than the keen political insight and understanding of public affairs which was recognised and appreciated by the wider circle of William Forster's friends and fellow-workers.

The reflection of the mother's influence upon the son she loved so dearly may be traced on every page of this memoir and in all his letters to her. For her birthday in 1893 Oakeley writes: "Every year, during which I am still permitted to look to Wharfeside, and to you at Wharfeside, the head, and guide, and beloved mother, is a gift added to one's life, of which I think I become every day more sensible. Round you every bright recollection of the past is centred, and at the same time your beloved letters bring me every week the assurance that what you were to

¹ "England and the Italian Question, 1859."

us all thirty years ago, and twenty years ago, and ten years ago, you still are. . . . We never have a joy or a sorrow which you do not share with us, and we know and feel that you do share it. We never have a difficulty in which we would not have your help before any other. And to me, perhaps, dearest Mother, the privilege is greater than to any of the others, for in the rough and tumble, the vulgarities, the brutalities of political life, in the many mistakes I am bound to make, in the vexations which I from time to time go through, the knowledge that I can turn all my thoughts towards an horizon where everything is to me perfectly bright and serene, and to be loved, is a privilege and a happiness which I cannot exaggerate."

And for another birthday he writes again: "It was indeed a blessed day, dearest Mother, that began your life, and to no one, now living, is that life more precious and more important in all matters of thought, hope, association, love, and intellect than it is to me. . . ." And this acknowledgment occurs over and over again in his letters. Their correspondence, regular and uninterrupted from his childish school-days to the last week of her life, was preserved by both mother and son, and her letters touch on every subject in which he was interested or on which he was working. Politics are their groundwork and substance, for her life had been cast in the world of politics; but of politics, in the party sense of the word, it is difficult to find in them even a trace. She writes to her little boy at school; and, after sending him the loving injunctions, the encouragements, and the warnings that mothers will ever want to send to an absent child, she tells him, with sure confidence in his interest, of the last development of the political situation in France or in Italy, of some Bill before the House of Commons, of the parliamentary work and political anxieties and hopes that are filling his father's mind and hers.

Echoes of the great world beyond England fill these letters which, if printed as they were written, would furnish a commentary on all the great events that were taking place in the world. Of England, and her relations to her Colonies, her relations to other European nations and to America; of our responsibility towards native races; of the grave

anxieties that were looming in South Africa—of all these she wrote fully and often. And to her early influence, and to the interest with which she invested such questions, Oakeley ascribed his constant desire for more knowledge about the politics, the history, the geography of other countries, which enabled him to acquire information so wide and so accurate about foreign affairs.

Underlying all else that she thought and wrote about, above and beyond her great interest in the world's history, there was ever the constant thread of deep, spiritual thought that gives the clue to her whole life. The "things of the Spirit" were ever present, ever deeply and actively interesting to her. Of the life of the soul, its need of God, its need of the whole Christian armour, she wrote freely and naturally, because these were realities as present and as vivid to her as the current events of political and social history.

If his mother's mind and character exercised a deep influence throughout his life on Oakeley Arnold-Forster, he owed scarcely less to the father who adopted him and who stood to him in the closest and most intimate relationship of affection. William Edward Forster was the son of Quaker parents, of William Forster, missionary and evangelist, and of Anna Buxton his wife. The Forster family were among the earliest followers of George Fox. It is believed that they came originally from the Yorkshire dales, but they had settled in Tottenham, and William Forster himself was born at Bradpole in Dorsetshire. After he became a manufacturer in Yorkshire, and made his home in the Valley of the Wharfe, it was often said that he closely resembled, both in figure and manners, the people of the West Riding among whom he lived; and men spoke of him as a "typical Yorkshireman." "Perhaps," suggested his biographer, "in his bluntness of speech and his indifference to his personal appearance, he furnished an example of a revival of the type of some far-away Dalesman ancestor." Mr. Gladstone, speaking of him when the political differences between the two men had been closed by William Forster's death, said in the House of Commons: "He was a man upon whom there can be no doubt that nature had laid her hand for the

purpose of forming a thoroughly genuine and independent character."

"A man of great power of mind," wrote a friend of the Arnold family about the time of his marriage,—“to a great degree self-educated, frightened of nothing, and willing to go on boldly and take the consequences of all his thoughts to a degree that few people will sympathise with. A man whom every one must respect, even if they abuse him, very likely to become a great man in the country, and the leader of the Radical party."

The memoir written by Sir Wemyss Reid gives a fair picture of William Edward Forster, graphic and full of interest. It would be very difficult to make any such sketch in a few pages, because to tell the story of his public life, full and important as it was, would be practically to tell the whole story of his times. And there would be much besides to tell, beginning with his upbringing by his saintly Quaker parents, his eager youth, the friendships he formed with the noblest figures in the Society of Friends of his day, with his uncle Sir Fowell Buxton, the champion of the cause of the negro slave, with Elizabeth Fry, the reformer of the conditions of prison life, whose stately presence and thrilling power Mr. Forster loved to describe.

With something of Carlyle's own power of forcible and picturesque description, his letters tell of the acquaintances he forms, and the friendships he makes, in his early middle life, friendships which included the Carlyles, Monckton Milnes, Sterling, and Emerson. The diary-letters describing the visit to him at Rawdon of Jane and Thomas Carlyle are so pleasant that an extract from them is given here. Part of the programme of their visit was to include an expedition to Derbyshire.

"*Aug.* 16, '47.—Past nine in the morning, but no chance of breakfast yet. Carlyle has just informed me from the abysses of his bed he will be ready in half an hour, and Mrs. C., I am told, has been poorly all night, so I will catch a chance of beginning a letter. I have been 'spa-ing' in this distinguished company now for three days. I joined them at Matlock on Friday morning. I find my company not only informing, but most pleasant and easy. Mrs. C. like a girl in her delight in new scenes and situations, and the master uncommonly good-humoured and accommodating, glad to find any one to relieve him of

the trouble of travelling, his general tone a good-natured humorous sarcasm, but every now and then a burst of furious indignation or a flash of fiery eloquence.

His pictorial power is wonderful, I should think unmatched. It is pleasant to see such a mind completely at play, and, moreover, they have both of them so much real heart and genial kindness about them that I believe I shall form a genuine friendship with them.

It's little notion of a Sunday they have; but last evening I deluded them into a Methody meeting-house, for which I did catch it afterwards; it was a sad failure. . . .

We had one rich scene on our journeyings. Determined to see Buxton properly, we drove to a first-class hotel in the Crescent—a stylish, comfortless temple of ennui, inhabited by old maids and worn-out half-pay roués, and peaked-up parsons, a species of walking white neckcloths, altogether the most opposite of Carlylean that can be conceived. Well, down we went to the *table d'hôte*, self at bottom as last comer, C. and his wife on one side of me, and a tall, starched, gentlemanly Irish parson, the ruling *genius loci*, on my left. For a time all went on easily in silent feeding or low grumbling, till at length Carlyle began to converse with parson, then to argue with him on Ireland, then to lose thought of all arguments or *table d'hôte*, and to declaim. How they did stare! All other speech was hushed; some looked aghast, others admiring. Of course they none of them had ever heard or seen any approach to such monster! We remained *incog.* the whole time, spite of all the schemes of the guests, and the entreaties of the waiter to book our names, and my proposal to Mrs. C. to save our expenses by showing him at so much a head."

"*Aug. 27.*—Carlyle and his wife are still with me, and seem to take to Rawdon kindly; like the quiet—said quiet being both novel and refreshing. He is busy sleeping, and declares himself lazy as a lotus eater. . . .

Monckton Milnes came yesterday, and left this morning. A pleasant, companionable little man, well fed and fattening; with some small remnant of poetry in his eyes and nowhere else, delighting in paradoxes, but good-humoured ones; defending all manner of people and principles in order to provoke Carlyle to abuse them, in which laudable enterprise he must have succeeded to his heart's content, and for a time we had a most amusing evening, reminding me of a naughty boy rubbing a fierce cat's tail backwards, and getting on between furious growls and fiery sparks, but managing to avoid the threatened scratches."

"*Sept. 6.*— . . . The Carlyles left me this morning. . . . His holiness and I have got on remarkably well these last few days, quite lovingly, and before leaving to-day he actually committed some pretty speeches to the effect that they had reason to be thankful for three pleasant, peaceful weeks, 'a Sabbath in the mountains,' etc., to which I purred forth a modest, complacent return of gratitude for their visit, and so we parted.

Mrs. C. has taken off a wild, furious, spit-fire of a kitten, out of which she has been sedulously and most vainly trying to 'love the devil,' à la Emerson. She begged me for a name, and so I have suggested 'Quack,' as short for Quaker, and emblematic of the giver."

To tell the story of Mr. Forster's life, some account would have to be given of the causes which moved him so deeply, and for which he laboured so long: the abolition of negro slavery, the protection of native races, the need for a comprehensive national system of elementary education, and the principal reforms demanded by the Chartists—although with some of their claims and some of the methods by which those claims were advocated he disavowed sympathy.

It was in very early days, when he was still quite a young man, that he began first to realise vividly the condition of the Irish poor. As early as the famine year of 1846, the terrible "Year of the Hunger," Mr. Forster gave devoted personal service in Ireland itself. Deputed by the Society of Friends, he journeyed through the country, alleviating distress in the famine-stricken districts, administering relief, and calling public attention to the condition in which he found the peasantry. Speaking afterwards to Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, he said, "If I had to take a part in the administration of affairs in this country, I would strive to accomplish two purposes—to give lasting relief to Ireland, and to get the children of the working classes out of the gutter by educating them."

His name will be most clearly remembered in connection with his Education Bill of 1870. He should be remembered also as among the very first of our statesmen who saw in the improvement of our relations with our Colonies the possibility of a great future federation of the Empire.

Nor should his work as mill-owner and employer be forgotten, an employer of whom it was said by Ludlow, the editor of the *Christian Socialist*, "He was the only mill-owner whom, at that time, I had ever heard claimed by the working men as a friend. . . . A mill-owner whom the working men all around love and trust, and take pride in as a friend, and will have, sooner or later, for their representative in Parliament."

His more public life began with his election to Parliament in 1861 as a member for Bradford. Four years later he was appointed by Lord Russell to the Under-Secretaryship to the Colonies. Short as was his tenure of this office,

it was long enough to lay the foundation of the deep and constant interest he took in all questions touching our Colonial possessions, and their relation to the mother-country.

In 1868 Lord Russell's administration was succeeded by that of Mr. Gladstone, and Mr. Forster became Vice-President of the Council, or, in other words, Minister of Education in the new Liberal Government. He found himself in a congenial office, in which he was able to accomplish part at least of the great educational reform he had longed to see undertaken. His Education Act gave him a great opportunity for providing for the establishment of schools wherever they were needed, "into which should be gathered the great army of untaught children," which should bring, he trusted and hoped, "to every child of English birth the blessings of education," and which might, he hoped, also keep for them as part of their heritage the teaching of the Bible in every school.

The opportunity was a great one; but the storm of angry discussion and debate which raged round the Bill was extraordinarily severe. It needed all Mr. Forster's fortitude and courage to carry it through Parliament as he did, in the face of the opposition of the representatives of the voluntary schools and also of the bitter hostility of a large section of Nonconformists. At the end of a long and exhausting session the Bill passed through both Houses of Parliament.

After the dissolution of 1874 and the accession of Mr. Disraeli to power, Mr. Forster was proposed as the successor to Mr. Gladstone, who had resigned the leadership of the Liberal party. A meeting of the party was held, when the votes were evenly divided between Mr. Forster's candidature and that of Lord Hartington. In a letter, which it was universally thought did him great honour, Mr. Forster withdrew his claims to the party leadership and retired in Lord Hartington's favour.

In 1880 Mr. Gladstone returned to power with a great majority, and Mr. Forster was appointed Chief Secretary for Ireland. The earnest sympathy with her people which he had shown in such practical form in 1846 made him the more willing to take upon his shoulders the heavy burden

of responsibility for the administration of Irish government. For the two anxious years in Ireland during which Mr. Forster served as Chief Secretary, Oakeley lived constantly with his father, working for him and sharing in all his experiences, his dangers and difficulties.

There is not space within the limits of this memoir to give more than a very slight outline of the life and character of William Edward Forster. As soon as Oakeley was old enough he shared actively in his father's interests, and both in Ireland and later, when Mr. Forster was working for Empire Federation, he acted as his father's secretary and helper.

A friendship based on the closest intellectual sympathy and on deep personal feeling made their relationship as father and son one of peculiarly affectionate and frank intimacy.

CHAPTER II

“ When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech.
And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood.”

TENNYSON : “ In Memoriam.”

Schooldays at Exmouth and Rugby—John Penrose—Oxford, and the Bar—Experiences in Ireland—The Reign of Terror of the Land League—Attempts to murder the Chief Secretary—Mr. Forster’s Resignation.

WHEN Oakeley was nine years old, he was sent to his kinsman John Penrose’s preparatory school at Exmouth. One of his first letters written to his mother from school must have made her smile. After thanking her for various treasures, he tells her, “ We went to Church yesterday, and they said the Comination, and I was so awfully glad of it, for the prayer-book tells you such a little about what will hapen to you if you do wicked things, but only what will hapen to you if you are good.”

Exmouth school was a very well-known one in Devon and Cornwall, and many Cornish and Devon families such as Aclands, Bullers, and Tremaynes had regularly sent their sons to be educated under the able but stern head-mastership of John Penrose. Accounts of the school and of its discipline vary very much. Some distinguished men, whose earliest school years were spent there, speak of Mr. Penrose’s severity, and of the Spartan regime which offered few of the amenities of life. All were agreed that Mr. Penrose was an exceptional man, and an exceptional teacher of classics and history, and it is fair to say that many of his pupils, including Oakeley Arnold-Forster himself, looked back with kindly and tolerant

memories to the school, and with real affection and esteem for the able man who conducted it.

The wide sea estuary, over which Exmouth looks, made bathing a natural resource, and the open moorland behind the town possessed many attractions for country-loving boys. Men who were once together at Exmouth School under John Penrose seem to forgather naturally in after-life, and to have a hundred old memories to discuss.

In later years, Oakeley certainly kept in touch with many of his Exmouth contemporaries; and a number of letters from his old head-master show the kindly interest with which Mr. Penrose followed his young kinsman's career at Oxford, and in the world of politics.

In a letter from Oakeley to his mother, written in July 1888 at the time of John Penrose's death, he says: "It was, I think, simply owing to Penrose's really fine and sincere character that we who had to do with him remembered only the good, and forgot, or, at any rate, never resented, the rough side of his nature. Besides my feeling of respect to him as my old master, I must say that his funeral touched me in another way too, for when I saw him laid in his grave, I saw the last of one more of that generation which to all of us younger ones is so utterly above and apart from the rest of the world. I marked one more gap in that once complete circle of faces under whose influence we all grew up. He was not one of the nearest or dearest, but still he had a share of that quality, I cannot describe, which every one of us recognises, which we have never seen elsewhere, and which when all those who have it are gone, we never expect to see again."

It was a natural sequence for an Arnold to go from Exmouth to Rugby; and the autumn of 1869 saw him established in the schoolhouse, under the head-mastership of Dr. Temple.

The boy's letters to his father and mother tell, as boys' letters do, of his school's successes in cricket and football, and of the friends he makes. In a letter to his mother, he tells her of the delights of the Arnold Library. "I have made the discovery that I can see the *Saturday Review* and the *Guardian* up at the Arnold Library, as well as the Hall

papers, so I am as well off here as at home, as regards news, except for the '*Spec.*' . . . It is such a place to fall back on, such lots of good books, and a jolly fire, and carpets, and a comfortable chair to read in." For the great world of books was opening itself out to him, and in books, English and French, his eager mind was finding the food that it needed and that it delighted in.

A friend who was his contemporary both at Exmouth and Rugby, and who was grieving for the loss of a dearly loved father, wrote to me long afterwards of the great sympathy and understanding that Oakeley showed him at this time :—

"We only saw each other occasionally at Rugby, for we were new boys, and in different houses. One day we were alone together, a somewhat unusual thing in the case of boys in different houses. I was in a very bitter and unhappy frame of mind, and I ran away from him, crying out in a kind of desperate way. I remember that by a kind of divination, he recognised that I was speaking of my father's death, and that he knew what I meant by my wild words. He ran after me and caught me up, and spoke to me with such wonderful sympathy and understanding, I thought then that his insight and comprehension were just wizardry. . . .

He exercised a great influence over me, for I had an unbounded admiration for his intellectual power. I remember how he talked at Exmouth. Why, he was not then 14! and how wonderful it all seemed to me. I daresay you do not think it is possible that I, who was not 14, any more than he was—was a competent judge that his conversation was remarkable—but I am very sure that it was remarkable, and touched on all kinds of subjects boys at preparatory schools are little suspected of discussing."

It was unfortunate for Rugby and also for Oakeley's school life that Dr. Temple's rule came to an end when it did. Dr. Temple was appointed to the Bishopric of Exeter, and was succeeded by Dr. Hayman, whose head-mastership did not tend to keep up the old discipline, or the high tradition of the school. Mr. Forster was dissatisfied with the new condition of things at Rugby, and took his son away at an earlier age than he had intended.

After working with a tutor until he was old enough to go up to the University, Oakeley matriculated in January 1874, and entered University College, Oxford, where Dr. Bradley, afterwards Dean of Westminster, was Master. As is usual with a man who comes to Oxford with a mind

receptive, and quick of apprehension, he found himself in a society and in surroundings which delighted him, in a place which has attracted and won the love of each succeeding generation.

Oxford, even if her sons criticise her methods, still keeps her old power, and exerts an incomparable influence over their lives and thoughts. Her appeal is made by the magic of her beauty, and by her great tradition, and it is made at a time of life when men are most sensitive to such impressions. Perhaps more than he gained from lectures, or from the teaching of tutors, Oakeley found in the congenial atmosphere of college life the mental stimulus that comes from the talk and discussions of equals, from the clash and debate of minds young and ardent, from "Education by mental contact, by mutual stimulation to new surmise, by the joint voyages that living and glowing minds set out upon, in the long midnight talks by the fire in college rooms."¹

John Ruskin's influence was just then attracting great numbers of undergraduates, who were drawn to him by the singular charm of his personality, by his wonderful words, and by the glamour of his teaching. His lecture-room was crowded week by week, and for a while, in order to carry his teaching into practice, the undergraduates went forth to the countryside to break up stones, and to construct a road under the direction of the Master. The young road-makers used to smile afterwards at the form their discipleship took; but they kept a real respect and affection for Mr. Ruskin, and kept also their belief in the fine and generous ideals that he taught and upheld.

The reading and study necessary for the History degree were peculiarly congenial to Oakeley, fitting in as they did with his natural interests, and with the study of political and social questions, which were becoming more and more absorbing to him.

The influences of his home, his father's distinguished career in the House of Commons, and his own natural inclinations, all pointed in the direction of a political training and a possible political future. And into the study of

¹ E. Montague.

history and economics, which make a general foundation and groundwork for political knowledge, he threw himself with ardour, and read, if not with that exclusive attention to the subjects for the schools that his tutors advised, yet with passionate interest, and with lasting profit to himself. He went in for his degree in 1877, and obtained a First Class.

He loved his University and he loved his college ; and everything that kept him in touch with Oxford in later years gave him pleasure. By an omission that he afterwards regretted, he neglected to take the degree of Master of Arts. When he became a member of the Government this omission was remedied very happily. A little party of friends in the House of Commons, who had been contemporaries at University College, went up to Oxford together, stayed at their old college, and received their Master's degree at the hands of their friend and colleague Sir William Anson.

Another link with his college gave him pleasure. When the great hall at University College was being restored and beautified, it was noted that five old members of the college were at that time Ministers in Mr. Balfour's Cabinet. A window was placed in the Hall commemorating the names and the arms of the Lord Chancellor, Lord Halsbury, Lord Selborne, Lord Salisbury, Mr. Akers Douglas, and Oakeley Arnold-Forster.

The two letters that follow were written by Mrs. Forster to her son whilst he was at Oxford ; the one when he was confronted by a " Divinity " examination, and the other just before he went in for the final schools.

" 1876.

" I am sorry the ' Articles ' are such a bugbear, my dear boy. Is it the learning by heart which is difficult ? I should have thought their very quaintness and archaic style would have made them easy to remember, especially for an intelligent mind, like I won't say whose, which knows them, almost every one of them, to be the monuments (not the entombments, I fear) of old controversies which have intensely interested and influenced human beings, occupied philosophers, divided Churches, and shaken Kingdoms. See

how much I could find for you in the Articles! and then a clever young Oxonian finds them nothing but a bore.

"However, I would rather you knew the Old Testament than the Articles. I should like to see the papers they set you. Farewell, my dearest."

"FOX GHYLL, *May 1877.*

"MY DEAREST OAKELEY—I feel sure that you will employ part of your first Oxford Sunday in writing home; and so I shall look with confidence for a letter in the dear hand upon the breakfast table to-morrow. Without waiting for that, I, too, am going to devote part of my Sunday in writing to you—our last Sunday at Fox Ghyll. . . .

"I feel as if it might be a troubled time in Parliament for father, for I do not see that his news about Eastern matters will quite satisfy *anybody*; and that is a position which demands some philosophy. However, in the *main*, I suppose he and the chief Liberal leaders are agreed, though they probably all of them will be more disposed than he will to occupy themselves in recrimination against the Government.¹ The chief good gained from the Conference,² and its failure, seems to me to be that it finally breaks all our ancient ties with Turkey, and sets us quite free for the future. And I hope the first use we shall make of that freedom will be to keep a vigilant watch upon the conduct of the Turks in their Christian provinces, and to interfere to some purpose if it proves that their promises of reform are a sham. I do not see *why* we should be hopeless about their Constitution. That it can work in its present shape, Kings, Lords, and Commons, I do not believe. But they have the strongest motives to make it a reality in respect to just dealing towards the subject races. You must have been as much interested as we were in the account of their Grand Council. If one could have forgotten that, instead of representing the nation it, in fact, represented the Notables and Pachas—that is, the wolves against the sheep,—one would have felt that it was the promise of a new day for Turkey. As it was, it was impossible not to admire the spirit shown in facing so many dangers for the sake of their national independence.

¹ Mr. Disraeli's Government.

² The Berlin Conference.

"You have not lost much by leaving us, for until yesterday we had had nothing but rain. You never had the problem of finding out how to dispose of a fine day! But I shall not soon forget how well you solved the problem of disposing of *wet* ones, by your steady work; and it is a greater happiness to me than I can say to see, in those who are dear to me, this power of steady and dutiful work, especially in young men, for it is so essentially manly. How much I hope, my dearest, that you may have all the success you deserve. We know that this is not entirely within your own control, and you must not make your dear self too anxious about it. I may say this without any danger that you will think I undervalue the happiness to us as well as to you of success. But, alongside of my thoughts and hopes about this, have been clinging to my mind lately the thoughts of that other and lifelong race between time and eternity which you are running. What a difference between the two! In the race towards the earthly goal, all run, but 'one receiveth the prize.' In the heavenward race 'so run I, not as uncertainly,' and whereas all earthly judgments are fallible and partial, here we have to do with an unerring Judge—One who judges not according to results, but motives. Does not that assurance encourage and stimulate while it awes our spirit? Dearest, in this race, in which we have no choice but to be runners, good or bad, may you who are setting out, and I, your loving mother who am nearing the goal, both of us 'so run that we may obtain.'"

Up to this time the four children adopted by William Forster had borne only their own name of Arnold. Now, however, that they were of age to decide, they wished to bear the name of their adopted father as well. The necessary steps having been taken, they were henceforward known by their double name; but to the end of his life, to a few of his oldest friends, Oakeley was always "Arnold," the name they had known him by at school or college.

Oakeley now settled in London to read for the Bar. He worked in the chambers of Mr. McCall, K.C., passing

his final examinations in 1879. Mr. McCall writes to me of this time :—

“It was, I think, in 1877 or '78 that he came to read with me. I was then getting a fairly large practice in small cases in London and in the Northern circuit. I was greatly struck with the care with which he got up the cases, and the interest with which he followed them in Court.

I soon after made the acquaintance of Mr. and Mrs. W. E. Forster, and was a frequent guest at 80 Eccleston Square. As our political views were much the same, I greatly enjoyed their hospitality and the interesting people I met at their house. One of my most interesting recollections of that time was the part Arnold-Forster took in conversation with such admirable talkers as Matthew Arnold and the late Lord Coleridge.

In 1879-1880 he had some work at the Bar, and during that time he argued several cases for me which I was not able to attend. Away from my books I am unable to refer to them more particularly, but I well remember one case in the Court of Appeal at Westminster when the Lords Justices in giving judgment spoke in high praise of the power and lucidity of his argument. In the winter assize of 1880 he came as the Marshal of Lord Coleridge; this work he enjoyed greatly. How well I remember him sitting beside the Lord Justice and following every point in the case. In all that he did he was ever *thorough*.¹

He continued to work regularly for me until his father was made Chief Secretary. His interest in legal work ceased for the time when he went to Ireland in the stormy days of the Land League. The Chief Secretary asked me to join him in Ireland, but legal office in Ireland had no attractions for me, and I watched from a distance the efforts your brave husband made to bring to the knowledge of the British people the tyranny and crime of the League. . . . I think it was in the summer of 1884, at a reception at Mrs. Forster's house, that I heard Charles Russell, Matthew Arnold, and Arnold-Forster discussing the Irish Question. There were two things to be observed—the mastery of facts by Arnold-Forster, and the conviction with which Russell said that no sane statesman could regard Home Rule as a practical policy.”

Work at the Bar came to him in due course, and, after a time, the briefs, coveted by the young barrister, came in sufficient number and importance to satisfy him that he could make his way in his profession. But in the meanwhile the development of political affairs took place that

¹ “My dear Oakeley,” wrote Lord Coleridge in a letter characteristically graceful and gracious a little later, “I thank you heartily not only for your book, but also for the thought of our old connection, so pleasant in memory to me, and which I would fain hope may some day soon be renewed. I shall read your book with care and interest you may be sure; with probable agreement and certain pleasure I am persuaded.—Ever sincerely yours, COLERIDGE.”

Mr. McCall speaks of in this letter, and for a time changed the current of Oakeley's work and thought, affecting the whole of his political life so seriously that it cannot be briefly passed over. His connection with Ireland and with official life as his father's private secretary began in the year 1880.

When the Liberal Government came back into power and Mr. Forster went to Dublin as Chief Secretary for Ireland, the opportunity soon came for Oakeley to serve under his father, and to be of use to him in the heavy task that lay before him. For the two years that followed he devoted himself entirely to lightening that burden and to sharing in his father's anxieties and dangers.

If the story of Mr. Forster's Irish Administration is told here at some length, it is because these experiences through which Oakeley lived were of a kind so unusual and so terrible that they exerted a very strong influence upon him and upon his career. It is hard to conceive circumstances more calculated to make an indelible impression on the mind of a man young and ardent than those under which he first saw Ireland. He saw his father, to whom he was deeply devoted, threatened and attacked, his life in constant danger. Even his mother was not spared. Those who could not shake the spirit of the Chief Secretary sought to intimidate his wife by means of letters which threatened Mr. Forster. When the difficulties and dangers of Mr. Forster's position thickened round him Oakeley never left his father's side, but accompanied him on all the journeys that were necessitated by the disturbed condition of Ireland, and by the tactics of the Nationalist party in Parliament.

He saw on the spot the suffering and misery caused to the poorest and most defenceless of the community—to men, women, and young girls, by a political tyranny that was alike cruel and calculating. In 1880 it had already become clear that the position in Ireland was one of great difficulty. The winter of 1879 had been marked by something approaching famine. Distress had intensified the general disaffection; and the power of the Land League and the rapidly increasing influence of Parnell were alike becoming formidable. The question that immediately faced the new Government

was whether, in view of the grave and threatening condition of the country, the existing Coercion Act, which would expire in the course of a few weeks, should or should not be prolonged. There was a hope that the prevailing hostility to the law might be allayed, and the agitation in favour of Home Rule be modified, by the removal of Irish grievances, by creating new Land Laws, and by establishing better relations between the two countries. The attempt seemed worth making, and the Cabinet decided that it would try to govern the country by means of the ordinary law alone.

As a remedial measure, demanded by exceptional circumstances, Mr. Forster brought in at once a "Compensation for Disturbance Bill," the practical effect of which would have been to suspend evictions for a limited period of time. The Bill, which was opposed by landlords and by the Conservative party for going too far, and by the Nationalists for not going far enough, was thrown out by the House of Lords at the end of the session.

The autumn and winter that followed saw the beginning of a long struggle waged between Mr. Forster and the forces of the Land League on the one hand, and between Mr. Forster and a section of his colleagues on the other. For, although to those on the spot it had soon become only too evident that, under the ordinary law, the executive was powerless to cope with the rising tide of lawlessness, there was nevertheless a powerful group within the Cabinet which offered strong opposition to Mr. Forster's demand that exceptional powers should be granted to enable the Irish executive to suppress disorder.

Trials of persons guilty of crime and outrage were held throughout the country during the autumn, but were abortive, for juries in the south and west simply refused to convict.

The practice of "boycotting" grew up suddenly, and in the hands of the Land League became a weapon of fearful power. The boycotted man was, in Parnell's own words, "shunned in the street, in the shop, in the market-place, even in the place of worship, as if he were a leper of old." Tradesmen refused his custom, under pain of being themselves ruined. If he had servants, they departed. If he went to church, the congregation rose and left it. Threatening letters came to

him warning him of his danger ; his cattle were found dead or mutilated, his barns and stacks were destroyed by fire. And it was not the well-to-do only who suffered, but still oftener the poorest labourers and the most helpless women, who fell under the ban of the Land League, and who were ostracised and punished. Reports of moonlighting outrages, of incendiary fires, of cattle-maiming, and attempted assassination increased week by week. To those who were of necessity brought face to face with this suffering, the sights that they saw, and the reports that were laid daily before them, were heart-breaking, and never to be effaced from their memory.

At any cost Mr. Forster was resolved that this rule of general terrorism enforced by personal outrage should be brought to an end. His earnest desire to better the condition of the country, echoed in the prayer that came from his very heart that God might indeed save Ireland, was never divorced for an instant from his determination that the law must and should be upheld, and that no combination, however politically strong, or personally threatening, should be allowed to defeat our paramount duty of giving protection to the weak and helpless against violence and compulsion. With all his heart he strove to discover and remove the causes of the disaffection and distress that he found prevailing. But neither that great task, nor the storm of unpopularity that met him ; neither the threats of the Land League, nor the misunderstanding of his own colleagues, made him swerve in his resolution that, as long as power rested in his hands, the Government should combat to its utmost the terrible system of tyranny which was oppressing men, women, and even dumb animals, who had incurred the displeasure of the Land League, and were condemned to its cruel and unrelenting persecution.

In a letter written to his sister Florence in November 1880, Oakeley says : " I am beginning to wonder what amount of crime undetected and unpunished will be thought requisite before a Coercion Act is called for. I must say that the only doubt in my mind for some time has been whether, granting that you suspended the *Habeas Corpus*, you would mend matters. Now, however, that Gladstone says that

things may become so bad as to make it imperative, I think it must be assumed that he, at any rate, thinks it would be an effectual remedy. If that be so, I fail to see in what particular the utter defiance of the law that we see now, can well become more pronounced than it is. I must say if I really thought that a Coercion Act would stop the outrages, I would, for the time being, suspend any constitutional or other safeguard without a moment's hesitation. . . . It seems to me that for the next six months or so the life and property of every honest man in the West of Ireland must simply be at the caprice of any ruffian who thinks them worth attacking. About a thousand crimes have been already committed, and it seems only reasonable to suppose that the number will increase, as the immunity from punishment becomes more universal and absolute. That such immunity at the present time exists to all practical purposes, seems undoubted; and I suppose if there is one thing more certain than that a criminal in the West will be undetected, it is that he will escape punishment if he be detected. For a long time I was convinced by the practical argument that suspending the H.C. would not enable the Government to punish the right men. I confess I do not think so any longer, and that being so, I am not so terrified by the dangers to liberty that the suspension would involve, when I consider that the only visible form of liberty in Ireland at present is the liberty to terrorise, to plunder, and to murder."

Parliament met again in January, and a "Protection" Bill was at once introduced, giving to the Irish Executive the fresh powers that were required, and empowering the arrest and detention of persons under reasonable suspicion of crime.

After protracted debates and strenuous obstruction on the part of the Irish members, the bill became law, and men were arrested who had organised intimidation, and who were known to be guilty, but whom no jury of their neighbours would have dared to convict. The duty which was thus carried out was distressing in the extreme to Mr. Forster, who had so earnestly longed to rule Ireland by methods of conciliation and peace. His life was one

of perpetual harassment and strain. He had to journey almost every week between Dublin and London, fighting the Land League in Ireland, and coming back hurriedly to fight the organised opposition of the Nationalists in Parliament, which was engaged throughout the session of 1881 with the intricacies of Mr. Gladstone's Land Act. The incendiary speeches which were made by Parnell and by the other Irish leaders, were closely and constantly followed by outrages, the total of which still grew; till in September agrarian crime was higher than it had ever been before.

"Unless we can strike down the boycotting weapon," wrote Mr. Forster at this time, "Parnell will beat us; for men, rather than let themselves be ruined, will obey him and disobey the law."

In October Parnell was arrested and sent to Kilmainham prison, and, closely following on his arrest, the Land League was proclaimed an illegal association, an association which had prevented the payment of rent by illegal means, by intimidation and conspiracy. The meetings were hereafter suppressed, and its treasurer fled the country hastily with its funds. If any justification for its suppression were needed, it would be found in the character of the No Rent manifesto that it had published and enforced, and in the character of the speeches made by its organisers, speeches that were inevitably followed by the crimes which they advised or palliated. "You, the members of the local Land League," said Mr. Biggar, "can use your exertions to get everything in favour of a person who is charged with such a crime as shooting a landlord."

The pamphlet called the "Truth about the Land League," which was compiled and published at this time by Oakeley, is a collection of facts, speeches, and documents, relating to the League and its leaders, both in and out of Parliament. It is taken entirely from documents published by the authority of the Land League, and the quotations contained in it are from sworn reports which have been put in evidence and not challenged. Marshalled as they are, they show clearly the consistent and systematic doctrine of this powerful organisation. Its publication brought

home to many readers the real nature of the movement. It was republished in several editions, but its facts remained unchallenged ; and that no answer to its charges was forthcoming was in itself a condemnation of the League. But the gravest condemnation pronounced on the League is to be found in the weighty and measured words of Mr. Gladstone :

"We have got before us," he said, "a state of crime widely extended. Gentlemen would have us to suppose that this crime is owing to distress in Ireland, that it is owing to evictions in Ireland. It is evident, by the testimony afforded by facts, that it is owing neither to the one nor to the other. . . . *With fatal and painful precision the steps of crime dogged the steps of the Land League.*"

Journeying through the countryside with one of the Resident Magistrates, Oakeley was present directly after some of the murders that took place in the West of Ireland. He had knelt in the roadside by a dying man who had been shot down by unknown enemies from behind a hedge as he drove to Mass, and he went into the homes of many other victims of the powerful Land League. Accompanying his father, he was present at the death-bed of a poor man whose only crime was that he had paid his rent. "I believe that he had committed that crime," said Mr Forster. "He thought it his duty to pay. Fifteen or sixteen men broke into his house in the middle of the night, pulled him out of bed, and told him that they would punish him. He said, 'My wife went down on her knees, and said, 'Here are five helpless children ; will you kill their father ?'' They took him out, they discharged a gun filled with shot into his leg, so closely that it shattered his leg. It will dwell with me all the rest of my life," added Mr. Forster, "and if I can do anything I will to prevent these things happening. Whatever hard opinion you may think of me the time will come when the Irish people will be thankful they were stopped."

"In Tulla Workhouse," wrote Oakeley to his mother the same day, "Father visited the poor fellow who was so brutally attacked the other day. I am afraid he is dying. It was a painful and dreadful sight, and made

doubly so by the poor man's pathetic story of the outrage, of his wife's appeal to the murderers to spare him, and by his sorrow on behalf of his little children. Father gave him £10 for his wife, and said a few words to him which I am sure must have comforted him not a little, and which indeed touched everybody."

Although some improvement took place gradually in the general condition of the country after the suppression of the League, the anger of the extreme members of the revolutionary party in Ireland, and of the Irish-Americans, led them to attempt to revenge themselves upon the man who represented English rule in Dublin. Many facts respecting the repeated attempts that were made on Mr. Forster's life only came to light in the trials after the Phoenix Park murders; but at the time, the danger that he was constantly in was well known to Mr. Forster himself, and to those round him. To Oakeley, and those others, to whom the life and safety of the Chief Secretary was so precious, the burden of anxiety, apprehension, and responsibility was terrible.

Threatening letters came by every post. A Secret Society was formed in Dublin whose object was "to make history by the removal of tyrants"—Mr. Forster being the first person against whom the conspiracy was directed; next to him being Lord Cowper and Mr. Burke.

The evidence of the "informer" Carey and of the other conspirators, revealed a history, extraordinary to read, of the hairbreadth and almost miraculous escapes from assassination that Mr. Forster had made. Plot after plot was formed to take his life; all just failed of success.

After several unsuccessful attempts had been made, Brady and Kelly, the men who afterwards murdered Lord Frederick Cavendish, lay in wait for him, intending to assassinate him while driving in his carriage from the Chief Secretary's Lodge. Warning was to be given of the approach of the carriage, but the heart of one of the conspirators failed him at the last; the signal was not given, and the carriage and its occupants passed unharmed. Again fifteen men waited for four successive nights in

Westland Row Station in order to kill him when he entered the train for Kingstown. Mrs. Forster and her daughter were recognised—so Carey said—but Mr. Forster was not there. He had gone down by an earlier train to dine at the Kingston Yacht Club, and again he had escaped the murderers' watch.

The following letter was written by Oakeley to his father a year later, when these facts were publicly disclosed.

“SAVILE CLUB, 28.1.83.

“DEAR FATHER—I cannot let the week go any further without writing a word with regard to the disclosures in the Dublin enquiries. When I last wrote I had not read the reports very closely, and I had not realised the whole bearing of the evidence—indeed, I was under the impression that when the ‘Chief Secretary’ was referred to it was Trevelyan that was meant. Now that I have gone through the whole of the evidence in the English and Irish papers I see that the escape was yours, and it was not the only one for which we have to be thankful. It is not easy to say, nor indeed to feel, all one ought, when reading now of your danger and your preservation.

“The fear was so long present to us all, and to me, perhaps, as much as any one, all the time we were in Dublin, that now, when suspicion has become certainty, it scarcely brings the shock of surprise that would seem natural.

“Nevertheless, I cannot help writing to say how deeply thankful I am; thankful, too, that I saw you go through it all without turning your head an inch one way or the other; with a patience and a courage which only we, at home, can ever really appreciate. It is a lesson I hope not to be thrown away.”

Mr. Forster's time of office was now drawing to a close. In May 1882, Mr. Gladstone—urged by some of the members of his Cabinet, and discouraged by the necessity for the continuous stern repression of crime—conceived the idea of making a new departure in his Irish policy. The negotiations known as the “Kilmainham Treaty” were

entered upon; and it was soon decided that Parnell and the other imprisoned members of Parliament should be released, on the understanding that they would give their support in future to the Government. Mr. Forster had insisted on certain conditions as being absolutely indispensable if the release of the prisoners was to be granted. Neither of the conditions that he considered necessary formed part of the "Treaty." Mr. Forster realised that his position was an impossible one, and at once resigned his office. The unconditional release he looked upon as a surrender to the law-breakers, a surrender that would make the government of Ireland impossible. His resignation was followed with tragic suddenness by the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke. The men who had so often tried to "remove" Mr. Forster, had murdered his successor, and the Under Secretary who had served Ireland with such devotion and loyalty.

In a few weeks a Coercion Act containing clauses of great stringency was passed; and the country began at last to understand the reality and seriousness of the dangers, concerning which he had given such grave and repeated warnings.

It can well be understood that the sights he had seen and the stories he had heard under circumstances so tragic burned themselves into Oakeley's heart. It is little wonder that he should have determined that, whatever ability he might possess, and whatever opportunity political life might hereafter give him, all that he could give should be devoted to helping and defending these men and women, whose only crime was their obedience to the law of the land, and their refusal to obey the "unwritten law" of the League.

The debt that England owes to those who have been loyal to her was a debt he ever recognised, and enforced with passionate earnestness.

Feeling thus strongly, it was natural that he should have made their cause his own, the cause of the loyal men and women in the North as well as of those who were scattered throughout Ireland.

As the representative for thirteen years of an Irish

constituency, he felt always that he was sent to speak, not only for the people of Belfast, with whom his relations were ever so cordial, but also, as far as possible, for the loyalists in the South and West of Ireland who are wholly unrepresented in Parliament.

CHAPTER III

“Forget not yet the tried intent
Of such a truth as I have meant,
My great travail so gladly spent,
Forget not yet.”

Sir T. WYATT.

Early Writing—Pioneer work for Imperial Federation—Candidature for Devonport—Gradual separation from the Old Liberal Party—The weakness of the Navy exposed—Mr. Stead and “The Truth about the Navy.”

“ARNOLDS seem to write as naturally as they learn to breathe or to walk,” said Sir M. Grant Duff; and, indeed, the habit of expressing himself by means of writing came to Oakeley with the ease of a purely natural gift; to write his thought was with him always the easiest and simplest means of its expression. No success that any of his books or writing brought him in later days gave him quite the same pleasure that he felt when the first article that he wrote for the *Nineteenth Century* was accepted in 1881, with a kind message of praise by the able and friendly editor, Mr. Knowles. This was the beginning of the long series of articles on various subjects contributed by him to that review during a period of some twenty-six years. It was the first also of that still longer series of his writings on military subjects which, beginning in 1881, ended with the book on the army, which was published in 1909, in the week in which he died.

Military and naval questions had from his childhood interested and attracted him with a fascination not to be resisted. “I think I must have been a soldier or a sailor, if I had not been a Quaker,” Mr. Forster said once to me laughingly. As soon as he was old enough, his holidays

were constantly spent in following military and naval manœuvres at home and abroad, visiting dockyards, watching soldiers and sailors, getting to know about them and their work, and ever reading and learning all that books, Blue books, and "service" papers could teach him.

His first article in the *Nineteenth Century* is called "A Civilian's Answer to Sir Garnet Wolseley." Though written twenty-nine years ago, neither its arguments nor its examples seem unfamiliar or wholly out of date; for the then recent war in South Africa furnishes the examples from which he draws the lessons he would enforce, and the difficulties entailed by the linked battalion system, the evils of drafting men from one corps to another, to serve in time of war under officers whom they had neither seen nor learnt to trust and follow, are some of the points on which he dwells. They have a familiar ring in our ears even to-day; and so has the anxious question that he asks, How far was the Army Reserve adequate for the immense double task it was calculated to perform—how far was it a real *reserve* at all?

Other articles that followed "A Civilian's Answer" in the *Nineteenth Century* were on "Proportional Representation," a subject which had always a great attraction for him; and two on the subject of "Outcast London" and "The Dwellings of the Poor." These were the fruit of work on which he was for a considerable time engaged with Miss Octavia Hill, and to which he gave much of his leisure time, investigating the material conditions under which the very poor live in London, and especially the conditions of their housing.

These articles give a brief and practical summary of the existing laws and machinery which provided for the repairing, pulling down, and replacing of insanitary houses, and the clearing of unhealthy areas; and a summary of the powers already given by law to compel owners of insanitary dwellings to put them and keep them in habitable condition. The creation of Sanitary Vigilance Committees is advocated, to put the existing law into operation: "Committees which would further and consolidate the isolated efforts of solitary workers among the poor." . . . "Society," he adds, "scarcely knows how much it owes to the silent labours of the

personal friends of the poor. To keep in actual touch in some way, however slight, with the life of the poor, ought to be the constant aim of any public man who attempts to legislate for their wants."

A small booklet that he wrote at this time, summarises in simple language the legal aspect of the question. In a practical form, easily accessible to workers among the poor, it was published by a Committee on which he served, which included among its members Lady Burdett-Coutts, Miss Octavia Hill, Lord Shaftesbury, and Canon Barnett. Committees such as those advocated were afterwards adopted with signal success in many large towns.

The ideas expressed in these articles, and the experience that he gained in the East of London, led to his connexion with a Working Boys' Club in Whitechapel, which he helped to establish and to carry on. Some years previously, whilst he was still an undergraduate at Oxford, his sympathy with social work led him to spend one of his long vacations in Liverpool in the company of two Oxford friends who were preparing to go out to missionary work in Africa. The three young men lived together in one of the slum districts of Liverpool, and worked there among the very poor; part of the vacation being spent by them in the Infirmary, where Oakeley shared with his friends their preliminary nursing and ambulance training.

In a letter to her sister written at this time, Oakeley's Aunt Susy (Mrs. J. W. Cropper) speaks of this experience, to him a novel and a sad one, which brought him for the first time into close contact with the misery of a great city.

"You will like to hear that dear Oakeley appeared yesterday while we were at tea, having come to Liverpool on Friday. It was hard to talk to him as he is so reserved, and yet it was unnatural not to talk of his occupation here. . . . I was rejoiced to find that he and his two friends are sent to Mr. E.'s parish, and that Oakeley likes him very much. I found out how he is filling up his time, and very beautiful it is to see such a life chosen voluntarily by a young man, even for a month or two, when he might be taking holiday, like all his friends and relations. . . . Yesterday morning he went to Mr. E., who talked over with



OAKELEY AND ROB. 1883.

him the work for the week, and then committed him to the Scripture Reader, who took him through the parish, and Oakeley seems to have been very much impressed with all the misery that he saw. He went through the streets leading down from behind Bold Street to the river, and there these young men are to visit, and to spend their days. When I asked Oakeley if he could not always come out to tea with us, he said that he should not be able to, as he was going to visit in the evenings when the men would be at home from work. On this hot day, when every one is thinking it too tiring to walk, and finding shady places even in this cool, fresh Dingle, I have thought so often of him in his self-imposed task, spending all its hours visiting in those courts and crowded rooms in the poorest streets. (He seemed very anxious not to be talked about.)"

The volumes of the *Nineteenth Century* for the years subsequent to 1881 form a guide to which, when trying to write this account of Oakeley's busy life and its many activities and interests, I have constantly to turn for reference ; for the articles that he wrote were always the expression of the thing that was filling his mind at the moment, and their dates mark the sequence of the ideas that possessed him, and of the work upon which he was engaged.

In the volume for 1883, there is an article entitled "The Liberal Idea and the Colonies," which throws light upon the beginning of a movement which was rapidly becoming, both for him and for his father, one of paramount importance. The idea of a closer union between this country and the Colonies, and the possibility of a future federation of the Empire, was not then the matter of general interest and wide acceptance that it has since become. These ideas were strongly held by a few men ; but to many they were unwelcome, and to still more they were unknown and unfamiliar.

Among the great services that Mr. Chamberlain has rendered to his country, perhaps the greatest has been the work that he has done in the past ten years in bringing this thought of a common Empire, the inheritance of ourselves and of the Colonies, within the beliefs of us all, and in making this ideal understood and desired by the man in the street, as well as by the student and

by statesmen of the two great political parties. The very language in which he clothed these ideas has passed into the vocabulary of common use, and the knowledge and love of the Empire of which we are citizens has become a part of our children's education and heritage. It was truly a great and memorable service to have rendered. In more than one of his speeches to great audiences of his fellow countrymen on the subject of their Empire and their responsibilities, Mr. Chamberlain reminded those to whom he spoke that though there are many *now* who believe in it and work for it, the ideal of a great federated Empire had been conceived and helped forward twenty years previously under great difficulties, at a time when the conception met with scorn and unpopularity, by a little group of men, among whom William Forster was foremost. Many may follow after them, now that the roads are made, but to those men who first saw the way and made it clear, the honour of having been the pioneers is due. These were the members of the Imperial Federation Committee, of which Mr. Forster was the first President, Lord Rosebery the second, and to which Oakeley Arnold-Forster acted as honorary secretary.

It was no easy task that lay before this little group. The ideas, which are the property of us all to-day, were not only new, but were very little liked, and were often scorned in 1883. It was a matter of common knowledge that opinion among advanced members of the Liberal party was strongly averse to drawing any closer the connection between ourselves and the Colonies. It was no rare thing to hear it said, when difficulties arose between the Colonies and this country, that to "cut the painter" might be no bad solution of the whole difficult problem. It is a solution which no serious politician would care to propound to an audience to-day.

Oakeley's article on the "Liberal Idea and the Colonies" begins with an argument which we may trust is not now needed: that "Separation from the Colonies is not part of the true Liberal idea"; that it is, in fact, diametrically opposed to that idea, rightly understood, and that a closer drawing of the bonds between us ought to be a prominent

part of a Liberal programme, and ought to be supported by the popular party.

“Whether the future of the English race is to present the picture of a score of separate nations, with different and conflicting interests and divergencies every day extending, or whether it is to be the record of the gradual and harmonious growth of an Empire undivided, and without cause for division, depends almost wholly upon the spirit in which the future is regarded by the leaders of opinion in this country at the present time. As long as we are content to heap up objections, and to magnify difficulties, nothing can be done. The people of England must make up their minds that they wish to share in the great future which is in store for their race, and must let it be known that such is their wish. The spirit and ambition of the country are not dead. The people of England will not be, and ought not to be, content unless they possess some great and absorbing ideal outside the immediate round of their material existence. . . . It is hard to conceive a more fitting opportunity for rightly directing national pride, the justifiable belief of Englishmen in the capacities of their race, than is offered by the acceptance of a rational and consistent policy having for its aim the federation of the Empire. . . .

In conclusion, why should we, and we alone, shun a consummation which every other nation in the world is striving to attain? . . . At present we are in great danger of throwing away that which every other nation of Europe is striving, with blood and treasure, with suffering and sacrifice, to obtain—namely, the union of members of a kindred and sympathetic race.”

A few days after his death there appeared in the columns of *The Times* the following account, written by Dr. Parkin, of Oakeley Arnold-Forster's share in the pioneer work of Imperial Federation, which summarises his services more fitly than any other words can do.

“SIR—The extraordinarily wide range of activities which filled the strenuous life of the late Right Hon. H. O. Arnold-Forster, and his prominence in questions now under keen debate, sufficiently explain an omission in the otherwise admirable sketch of his career given in your columns of the 13th instant. That omission should, however, be supplied. His association with the Right Hon. W. E. Forster in founding, in 1884, the Imperial Federation League, a body which, in its less than ten years' active work, has been said by one of the highest journalistic authorities in this country to have ‘shifted the mind of England’ in regard to colonial affairs, engrossed for a long time his best thought, and profoundly affected his whole subsequent career.

With the late M. Labillière, he was hon. secretary of the conference held in July 1884, at which men from different parties determined that an effort should be made to overcome public ignorance on the great problems of the colonial Empire. He was chiefly instrumental

in preparing the report of that conference and distributing it in every part of the Empire. When the league was formed in the autumn of the same year, he became a member of the council and of the executive committee, and for years afterwards, both while Mr. Forster lived and later under the presidency of Lord Rosebery and the Hon. Edward Stanhope, he laboured constantly by tongue and pen, and with a wonderful variety of knowledge and literary resource, to forward the work of the league and promote an understanding of colonial problems.

Later, in his position as a director of Cassell & Company, he gave special attention to the publication of books intended for popular education on national questions, sparing no time or thought, as I have reason to know, in making them efficient instruments for creating an intelligent Imperial patriotism. If the influence of these books is to be measured by their large sale, then Arnold-Forster's work must be reckoned among the principal forces which have brought Empire problems to occupy a foremost place in our national politics. The influence of those earlier years has been evident in all his later work; and his profound belief in the Empire and his intense anxiety for its welfare probably best explain the vehement energy and even asperity with which he combated what he believed to be ignorance of its vital problems.

When the brusque manner which sometimes exposed him to criticism, but which covered one of the tenderest natures I have ever known, has been long forgotten, the far-sighted patriotism of this singularly gifted man will, I am convinced, be recognised more and more as time goes on.—I am, sir, your obedient servant,

GEO. R. PARKIN.

March 19, 1909."

With an equally close knowledge of the work done in those early days, his friend Sir John Colomb also wrote:—

"As one of the four or five men, nearly all of whom are now dead, who induced Mr. W. E. Forster to initiate and lead that movement, and as a participator in the subsequent work of organising it under the name of the Imperial Federation League in 1884, I crave a small space to refer to this phase of Arnold-Forster's manifold activities.

The corporate existence of that league was short—it dissolved itself in 1893—but the nature of its aim and the character of its work accomplished more, and in a shorter space of time, than any one of its originators anticipated. But in order to appreciate the real value of the labours of Arnold-Forster in relation to that movement, it is necessary to remember things as they were in 1884 and as they are now in 1909.

An attempt to change the direction of public opinion as it was in 1883-1884 towards things Imperial seemed then almost a hopeless undertaking. Many politicians and publicists curtly dismissed the idea as a 'silly fad.' Had it not been for the sagacity and courage of that great man, W. E. Forster, who guided its counsels, happily combined with the marvellous activity of his adopted son, Arnold-Forster—a first honorary secretary of the league—the attempt which succeeded must have hopelessly failed. To the memory of these two men belongs the

honour of that achievement, and its measures should be apportioned by reference to the results which that movement produced.

These may be summarised thus. Leading men of both political parties at home and prominent representatives of the colonies were first brought together for the definite and distinct purpose of proclaiming the necessity for closer union between the several self-governing communities within the Empire. This was phenomenal then; and as a result the attitude of both political parties towards the colonies changed. The trend of public opinion was diverted into a new channel. By enlarging the scope of the political purview and by creating a wider sense of duties and responsibilities, British communities—geographically far apart—approached each other with new sympathy and revived hope. Then and thus was a new spirit of rational Imperialism born. All that has happened since has been but the natural development of its inherent power and a widening of the sphere of its influence.

To the energy, the extraordinary knowledge, and, above all, the sincerity of purpose of Arnold-Forster the credit of the success of that movement in 1884 is most largely due. While to-day on every side we see the beneficent results, the conspicuous part he played in promoting their originating cause ought not to be forgotten.—Yours obediently,

JOHN C. R. COLOMB.

CARLTON CLUB."¹

Later in this memoir reference must often be made to the subject of Imperial Federation; for the conception lay at the root of all Oakeley's ideals for his country and her future.

"First build your castles in the air, and then lay the foundations under them" was Mr. Ruskin's message, as it is the substance of the "Master Builder's" philosophy. Mr. Ruskin's words spoken to his students at Oxford were never forgotten by Oakeley, and they give the key to much of his work and thought. To help to build the firm foundations necessary for the great structure of his national ideals and vision was ever his desire, and was the thing at which he aimed throughout his life; whether he were writing books to teach citizenship to children, or whether he were studying problems of national economics, or questions of national and Imperial defence.

In the summer of 1883 Oakeley accompanied his father

¹ Sir John Colomb's death, which occurred very soon after this letter was written, in the spring of 1909, removed another of that small band of men whose services were given ungrudgingly to the cause of Imperial Federation from the inception of its idea. His life was one of devotion to a high national ideal, and his political career was given to Imperial rather than to party causes.

on a journey to the East of Europe, which took them, after visiting the Greek Islands, to Athens, to Constantinople, and to the Balkan provinces. Mr. Forster's love of travel and of studying for himself on the spot the social conditions of other countries, had given to his children, as soon as they were old enough to be his companions on these journeys, rare opportunities of seeing a great part of Europe. Oakeley shared his father's love of travel, and throughout his life it was almost the greatest of his pleasures.

Hungary and the Carpathians had been visited once—Switzerland and France often; they had made a journey through Russia and had visited the northern capitals in 1882; and in 1883 they made this Eastern tour, and travelled in the Balkans. Amongst other experiences they were hospitably entertained by Prince Alexander, who was still occupying the somewhat shaky Bulgarian throne, and were enabled to study on the spot, and with the help of M. Stoiloff and other ministers, the conditions of education, and the reforms which were being set on foot in the principality. Their experiences furnished the substance of an article by Oakeley in the *Nineteenth Century* on the Balkan Provinces.

Besides his articles in the *Nineteenth Century*, his literary work at this time included the political editorship of the *Statist*, to him a very pleasant and congenial post. He wrote the political leader that appeared every week in the paper; and it was only the pressure of other work that compelled him in 1886 to give up a connexion and work that he liked so much.

The active life of the political world and of the House of Commons could hardly have failed to make a strong appeal to him. The appeal was, indeed, an almost irresistible one, and to share in the strenuous activities and opportunities of the life in which his father was engaged was his constant desire; although his father's wise counsels dissuaded him from embarking upon it too early, and until his way had been fairly made in his profession. One or two invitations came to him from constituencies in 1879-1880, but were declined.

In 1881, his father, writing to thank a friend who had

conveyed such an invitation from the Liberal party at Oxford, says :—

“MY DEAR H.—I have been carefully thinking over your letter about Oxford and Oakeley, and I have talked to him about it, and he agrees with me that we ought not to entertain the proposal, tempting though it be on many accounts. I feel that going into Parliament *now* would be fatal to his professional success, though if he gets on at the Bar, this might not be the case a few years hence.

“He feels himself that he ought to be earning his own living, and though he would be a great political help to me, I doubt whether in the present commercial depression I could rightly face the additional expenditure. I can, therefore, only thank you for your real kindness in the matter, and beg you to inform your Oxford friends that I feel their thinking of Oakeley at all as very flattering, and very pleasant both to him and to myself.”

A year or two later an invitation from Devonport was, however, accepted, and, after addressing meetings in the constituency, Oakeley was adopted as one of the two Liberal candidates for the Borough. To represent a great naval port was in itself no small attraction to him, and the kindness of his West-country friends, and their cordial reception, made the time of his candidature a pleasant one. His speeches dealt chiefly with questions of naval, military, and colonial policy, very little with party questions.

But his position as a member of the Liberal party, though it had come about naturally, and was the outcome of inherited beliefs, accepted at first without grave question, could not have lasted very long ; his allegiance was daily becoming more strained. Perhaps he was almost unconsciously affected by his father's somewhat difficult position in the party ; in any case, on the question of Home Rule, Oakeley's separation from it must have come about shortly afterwards. It actually came about on the question of the Egyptian policy of the Government, and the war in Egypt which led to the disasters of 1884, and to the sacrifice of General Gordon.

In some of his first speeches, and in one of the last that

he made in Devonport, he deprecated that policy, and condemned the conduct of the war. His articles in the *Statist* were a strong condemnation of the want of a definite and constructive Egyptian policy on the part of the Government. He wrote at the same time to the Liberal Committee thanking them for the unvarying kindness and cordiality shown to him, and definitely resigning his candidature.

"In one of my earliest speeches in Devonport," he wrote, "I regretted our having set foot in Egypt. I regret it still. But in the interval we have, it seems to me, placed ourselves under the absolute necessity of undoing some of the harm that we have brought about," and he concluded, "were I your member, I should feel it my obvious duty to try and persuade my constituents to adopt my views on a matter on which I feel so strongly. As a candidate, I think my duty is to avoid any step which may weaken or divide the party."

From the time when the Government resolved on the abandonment of the Sudan, and sent Gordon to Khartum to carry out the operation, their policy of hesitation estranged many other Liberals, who, like Oakeley and his father, condemned their delays, and their shrinking from responsibilities and obligations because those obligations proved to be arduous and costly.

When Gordon's life and our national honour seemed to them alike endangered, they were unwearied in their efforts to arouse public feeling before it should be too late ; and the tragic death of Gordon came to them with all the weight of a great and bitter personal grief.

In a letter, in which he explains the reasons which led him to resign his membership of the Westminster Liberal Association ; the Government's policy in Egypt, and the want of any constructive Liberal policy towards the Colonies and the Empire, are the points of difference that he dwells upon.

"I still hold very strongly what I have always been taught to consider Liberal views ; but I cannot find anything in Liberalism, as I understand it and have learned it, which makes it a duty to support a Government which seems to be unable to conduct the everyday business of the country with success and dignity. At present it seems to me it may

only be a matter of time before this Ministry estranges the Colonies and possibly fools away the Empire."

In letters written to me¹ some little time later, but before our marriage, he defines his position more clearly:—

"I do not think we need agree to differ about our politics at all. I believe you are not a bit more radical really than I am. Only I do not find a proper expression of my views as to what is 'radical' or 'liberal' in any particular set of formulas, still less in the set which for some mysterious reason has for the moment become associated with the so-called Liberal party. I believe that, apart from questions of administration, which involve special and elaborate knowledge, political matters generally should be approached from the outside; that a political problem should be dealt with by the light of all the knowledge, the experience, the moderation, the forbearance, the romance which have accumulated in a man's mind during his whole life. I believe that directly you get to phrases like that elaborate lie, 'Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity,' you are lost. I don't mean that there are not principles in politics, but I do mean that they are not special principles applicable by rule of thumb to certain questions of legislation and administration. As to the main principles of Liberalism, the perfect acquiescence in the equality of all men until they show that they are more than equal to their fellows, I am certain I go quite as far as you do; and unearned privileges seem to me detestable."

To the Same.

"With what you say about G—— opposing his party, I do not quite agree. To talk about supporting any particular set of men just now, simply because they call themselves the Liberal party, seems to me a mistake. It is a mere truism to say that that party is kept together by no principle whatever; and that there are scarcely fifty members in it who, apart from the vaguest generalities, are agreed either as to means or ends. To use a logical phrase the

¹ Letters to Mary Story-Maskelyne.

term Liberal party *connotes* nothing just at present, except the fact of sitting on one side of the House of Commons.

"Surely anybody five years ago, who could have foreseen the amount of misery, and hopeless, pointless suffering that the Gladstone Government was about to inflict upon the world, and its absolute failure to do good, would have used all his energies to prevent its coming into power. And so, if G—— thinks that one particular section of the so-called Liberal party is likely to do harm instead of good, I think he is bound to try and prevent the harm being done.

"As for me, I wish the names Liberal and Tory were both at the bottom of the sea, and then we could start afresh, and begin to judge men and policies, not by virtue of the particular catalogue in which they are placed, but by the light of their conformity with honesty, reason, and common sense."

Side by side with the question of Imperial federation, and inseparably linked with it, the subject of the Navy was becoming every year of more and more absorbing interest to Oakeley.

The growth of the Empire since our last naval war, the responsibilities forced upon us by its magnitude, the new problems entailed by the necessity of giving protection to our Colonies, to our sea-borne commerce, and to the ships that bring us our food, were equally Imperial and Naval problems.

His deep love for the Navy was a thing innate in him, his knowledge of it was already a matter, not of second-hand information, but gained by constant visits to the ships themselves in every stage of their construction and when afloat. The worth of what he wrote and said about our fleets lay in the fact that he had always been to see for himself that which he spoke or wrote of.

An accurate memory, combined with great industry and love for the subject, gave him by degrees a store of knowledge that he acquired and used much as a great reference library is collected and used, volume being gradually added to volume, and every one being known to the owner. It has been said that every one has an exceptional memory

for one subject. Oakeley's memory for ships and for every detail about them seemed like a special sense or faculty ; it was in truth a special faculty highly developed by a great capacity for taking pains.

The history even of ships which had passed out of the fighting line, the story of the names they bore, and of the still older ships after whom they were called, had all entered into his reading and into his imagination, and were never forgotten. But the most valuable part of his knowledge was that which he learned on board the ships themselves, making himself as familiar with their construction and armaments as he was with the walls and furniture of his house, and studying every detail of engines and machinery with all an engineer's love of their mechanics.

The following letter may perhaps be quoted here, for, though it was written at a later time, it is extremely characteristic of the way in which, all his life, he was accustomed to learn his facts and get his experience.

To his Mother.

"I got back last night from a short visit to Plymouth, whither I had been compelled to go on business.

"I need hardly tell you that I found my way to the dockyard, and spent much of my time among the ships. I also had a special experience which is of great value to me. I went out to the Eddystone in one of the new torpedo-boat destroyers. I had been in boats of the kind before, but never under service conditions, and at sea. A portion of the time I spent in the stokehold, a rather thrilling performance. You go down through a small steel trap-door in the deck and find yourself in darkness in a small iron-walled chamber with the dim figures of five grimy men moving about in the narrow space. A fan is revolving at a high speed above, and driving down a torrent of air, till the pressure is equal to the weight of $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches of water—something very powerful, I assure you. Every now and then one of the four furnaces is opened, and the whole place glows fiercely while the fire is being stoked; then darkness again, the rushing of the fans drowning every sound. Getting on deck again was a serious business. The moment

the hatch is opened there is a fierce upward gush of the highly-compressed air, and it seems as if one were going to be blown right up into the sky like the cork of a soda-water bottle. I was dressed in high sea-boots, a borrowed coat, and a 'sou'wester' tied under my chin. This last was lifted right up above my head, and indeed nearly went overboard. I need hardly say that I came up as black as a tinker, and have had the greatest difficulty in getting the fine coal dust out of my hair and clothes. But the experience was useful, though not exactly pleasant. We steamed over 23 knots, and those who do not know what a closed stokehold is like under these conditions should not talk about it. The reason that the stokehold is in darkness is that the oil-lamp will not burn in the forced draught, and the Admiralty will not go to the expense of putting in electric lights. This is a great mistake. The work is very trying, and in action the situation would be terrible. It is essential that the men should have confidence in their chief and in each other, but such confidence is scarcely to be maintained when the aids of gesture, expression, and demeanour are all lost. I am going to try and get this matter set right if I can."

His first article on "Our Position as a Naval Power" appeared in 1883. Its text is furnished by Mr. Gladstone's speech in 1878, which laid down the formula that "The strength of England is not to be found in alliances with great military Powers, but is to be found henceforth in the efficiency and supremacy of her navy—a navy as powerful now as the navies of all Europe."

The text is a striking one with its assumption of the necessity of our absolute naval supremacy. The contention of the article, supported by facts and figures, is that Mr. Gladstone's estimate was too sanguine in 1878, and altogether inaccurate in 1883. That the relative strength of our Navy as compared with the navies of other Powers was not (in 1883) what it used to be; but that, when we pass from relative strength to actual efficiency for doing the work entrusted to it, the want of available strength is in truth alarming. Recalling the enormous extension of our Colonial possessions and dependencies since the last occasion of our

being engaged in maritime war, and summarising the gigantic additions to our sea-borne commerce which have resulted from the increase of our territory, he contends that, *relatively*, the fleet of 1882-3 was far weaker than that of 1806. Yet since 1806 the work which the Navy, and the Navy alone, must perform has been increased literally a hundredfold, and the conclusion of the matter is summed up briefly in the plea to "Increase the Navy."¹

"It will be answered that to increase the Navy requires additional expenditure, and that the country is not willing to add to its maritime budget. But this is not the fact; or, if it be the fact, it has not hitherto been proved to be so. The question of the Navy has always been considered a question outside the scope of party politics, and rightly so. There is not a politician or elector in the country who is not perfectly aware of the vital importance of preserving an absolute superiority at sea in all events."¹

"If those in authority can fairly say to the public: The Navy is so strong and efficient that under no circumstances could it fail to render the services required of it—the public will be content, and will refuse to spend more money upon it than it does now. If, on the other hand, this pledge cannot be given, it is contrary to all experience to believe that the country or Parliament would refuse any additional outlay which was shown to be necessary to insure the required degree of efficiency. The question still remains, whether, even with the contemplated additions, the Navy is likely to be sufficient as well as efficient. If it is not, we are in danger of losing not prestige merely, not the barren glory of an acknowledged naval supremacy, but the very life-blood of our national existence. To fall short of an absolute command of our ocean highways means that we shall find ourselves face to face with war premiums of 50 per cent, the stoppage of our food supply, and scarcely less important, the stoppages of our supplies of raw material. Panic, disorder, suffering, starvation among our overcrowded population will bring home to us with painful clearness the error we make in neglecting to maintain a sufficiently powerful, and, above all, sufficiently numerous Navy."

¹ "Our Position as a Naval Power," *Nineteenth Century*, 1883.

The naval situation, which had seemed to some civilians, and to many naval officers, to be grave in 1883, was yet graver in the following year. No real increase had been made to our naval strength; our coaling stations were still unprotected, our fleets were still unprovided with modern guns, or with torpedo equipment. And though many naval men knew and deplored the dangerous insufficiency of our fleets, nothing seemed likely to rouse the Government of the day from their indifference, or to wake up the country to a sense of the real danger that was being incurred. Lord Northbrook, the First Lord of the Admiralty, actually made the famous declaration from his place in the House of Lords in May 1884, that if Parliament were to give him a supplementary naval vote of two millions he would not know how to spend it, so complete did he consider was the preparation for war made by his department.

The charge against the responsible authorities formulated by Oakeley, and briefly put is as follows: "That successive Governments, and more particularly the Admiralty officials acting under the authority of those Governments, have exposed the Empire to the greatest conceivable danger—a danger to which it is at this moment liable. . . . That being charged to maintain a naval force adequate to the paramount needs of this country, they have brought us to a condition of doubtful superiority to a single European power. . . . That our ships are totally insufficient in point of numbers, and inadequate in point of construction, while our guns are for the most part utterly obsolete in any service but our own. That, being the trustees of the great Colonial Empire won by our predecessors, they have deliberately refused to take ordinary precautions for its defence. And, lastly, that, having at their disposal the finest material in the world, they have failed to provide us with an adequate *personnel* for manning the fleet in time of war."

Hardly three weeks after the publication of this article in the *Nineteenth Century*,¹ Parliament, which had been repeatedly told that nothing more was required or would be asked for the Navy, was asked to sanction an ex-

¹ "The People *versus* their Naval Officials," *Nineteenth Century*, 1884.

penditure of three and a half millions sterling in addition to the ordinary vote, to make good deficiencies in H.M. Navy. In February, an alarm arose of a possible war with Russia. In the May following, a further vote of three millions was taken; and both these additions were supplementary to a large increase in the ordinary naval estimates.

What had happened to rouse up the Government to a sense of danger and to the deficiencies in the service? Briefly, what had happened was this. "In the autumn of 1884 the accusations of the past were formulated, not as hitherto in professional journals, in scientific meetings, in private official remonstrances, but in a penny newspaper. It was left to the enterprising and vigorous editor of a daily paper to create a new departure in a matter of vital and national importance."

What no professional remonstrances or appeals could do, a vigorous agitation in the Press effected, and to Mr. Stead, the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, this great revolution in naval affairs was largely due. The part played by the *Pall Mall Gazette* may be told in Mr. Stead's own words.¹

THE REBUILDING OF THE BRITISH NAVY

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER'S APPEAL

"At the beginning of the year 1884, the naval power of England had sunk to its lowest point. It is difficult to-day, exulting as we do in the consciousness of the restoration of our naval strength, to realise the absolute despair which had fallen upon the best men in the British Navy in the third and fourth years of Mr. Gladstone's Administration. It was the second year of my editorship of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, when

¹ Mr. Stead, in a letter to Oakeley, accompanying the *Review of Reviews* for July 1897, said: "I am sending you by this post a copy of the new number of the *Review of Reviews*, in which I tell the story of the beginning of the rebuilding of the Navy. As it was you who started the whole thing, so far as I am concerned, I have taken the liberty of saying so. I hope there is nothing in the article to which you will feel disposed to take exception. May I, when I am writing, ask you to accept two little *Books for the Bairns*, which endeavour to inculcate the same patriotic lessons which are so admirably enforced in your *Citizen Reader*, a book which I never pick up without a glow of gratitude to you for having written it."

Mr. Arnold-Forster, to whose initiative in this matter the Empire and the nation are deeply indebted, came to me, and in his brusque, abrupt fashion asked me when I was going to take up the question of the Navy. He then set forth roughly an outline of the actual position of things, which, of course, I had often heard in a vague way before, but which had never been brought forcibly home to me. I asked him to leave his papers, and undertook to do what could be done. I at once set about the fulfilment of my promise, and was soon overwhelmed with evidence that Mr. Forster had in no way exaggerated the danger of our position. It was evident that something must be done, and done at once, unless our Imperial position was to go by the board of Germany, who was just entering the field of colonial extension. France was bitter and hot against us on account of the recently concluded Egyptian campaign. Little or nothing had been done to consolidate our Colonial Empire, and it seemed difficult to exaggerate the peril to which we were exposed. We depended absolutely on the Navy, and the Navy itself was far below par. To realise this condition of Imperial peril, and to devote every energy which, either personally or journalistically, I possessed to remedy it, was one of those duties which are instinctive, and for a month or more I lived and moved and had my being in what may be called the world of the Navy. I am fortunately dowered with a temperament that is almost absurdly optimistic. To see a great evil or a terrible peril clearly, is a sure prophecy that the time has come to strike a great blow against the evil, or to ward off the threatened danger. But notwithstanding this inheritance of buoyant confidence, I had some difficulty in making head against the all-pervading despair which possessed the Service.

I well remember my first interview with the then First Sea Lord, who received me kindly at the Admiralty, listened to me with a certain sympathetic compassion, and assured me that it was all of no use. There was indeed in the old Admiral's eye a certain feeling of incredulous wonder at the supreme audacity of the young journalist, who cheerily declared that if only he could secure his facts he would compel any Government, even Mr. Gladstone's, to grant as many millions as were necessary to restore the sea power of England.

'It cannot be done, sir,' said Sir Cooper Key, mildly but firmly. 'It is no use. I have done my best. We have all done our best, and we have failed—utterly failed. Do you think that you could succeed where all the Sea Lords have failed, and move Mr. Gladstone?'

'Yes,' I said, 'I think I shall, if you will give me my facts.'

'But,' said Sir Cooper Key, bluntly, 'I have already given them to Mr. Gladstone. We have all done everything short of resigning our offices to awaken the Government to a sense of the deadly peril in which we stand. But it is no use. Mr. Gladstone thinks of nothing but Ireland and home affairs, and we can get nothing for the Navy, not a penny.'

One of Sir Cooper's colleagues, bluff old Beauchamp Seymour, who was created Lord Alcester after the bombardment of the Alexandrian Forts, was equally despondent, but expressed his despair in much more blunt sailor-like language. He had been speaking of the extent to

which the Navy had been allowed to run down. I said to him, 'But if these things are so; in case of a war, say, with France, what would happen?'

'I tell you what would happen,' said Lord Alcester, grimly, 'within twenty-four hours of the declaration of war, Sir Cooper and I, and all the rest of us at the Admiralty, would be swinging by our necks from the lamp-posts in front of Whitehall, where we should be strung up, every man Jack of us, by the nation whom we had betrayed, and it would serve us right, too,' said he. 'But what can we do? We protest, we make representations, we threaten to resign—I really do not know whether it is not our duty to resign outright, and declare that we refuse to be responsible for a Service which we know to be far below the safety level.'

These were two at the head, but when I went lower down in the Service and consulted the admirals, commanders of the fleet, the captains in active service, the younger men who were coming forward to the front, and have since succeeded to chief command, I found everywhere the same story. Optimist or pessimist, they all knew their facts, and those facts were very bad indeed.

When 'The Truth about the Navy' in the *Pall Mall Gazette* appeared, the effect which it produced was immense. The newspaper press, with few exceptions, took up the subject, for it is notable that in this last great Imperial work of the century neither the Commons nor the Lords rendered any service worth speaking of. The work was done from first to last by the Press. All that the Commons did was to vote the money which the newspapers had taught the public to demand. The articles appeared day by day until they were completed, and were then reprinted in a pamphlet, called 'The Truth about the Navy and the Coaling Stations.'

The net result of it all was that within three months of the publication of 'The Truth about the Navy,' I had the supreme satisfaction of going down to the House of Lords to hear Lord Northbrook stand up in his place in the Senate, and from the very bench where, in the month of May, he had declared that the Navy was so perfect he would not know what to do with £2,000,000 if he got it as a gift, he declared that the state of the Navy was such that he must have at least three and a half millions over and above the ordinary estimates of the year.

The change that was produced in public sentiment had no doubt long been in preparation, but the publication of 'The Truth about the Navy' was the spark which fired the mine."

In the conversation with Mr. Stead, which so aroused Mr. Stead's interest in the subject of the Navy, Oakeley had laid before him a rough schedule of the lines which he thought the *Pall Mall* enquiry should follow. He also wrote a preliminary article for the *Pall Mall Gazette* which appeared in August.

In the autumn he approached some of the leading men in the City, and the representations they listened to, and the feeling aroused by the revelations in the Press, created so deep an impression that a great meeting was held in November in the City, at which Mr. W. E. Forster and others spoke, which no doubt helped to bring about the change in the attitude of Government. Oakeley would never admit the use of the word "revelations" in connection with the *Pall Mall Gazette* or the *Nineteenth Century* articles, or with the speeches made at this time; for he said that "though many startling facts had recently been published, showing great deficiencies in our scheme of defence, to talk of these statements as novelties, revelations, or discoveries, was absurd. They are the commonplaces of professional literature, they are the common property of every combatant officer, and are, and always have been, perfectly familiar to the department at Whitehall. To the public, it is true, they are new, and as it is now painfully evident that the most effectual manner of rousing the Government to a proper performance of their duties is by an appeal to the crowd, it is necessary to make the best of the situation, and to make the appeal as effectual and as cogent as possible, for if the public knows little about the Navy, it cares much."

The following letter to me was written at this time :—

To Mary Story-Maskelyne.

"I hear that you have been told that I overstated the case about the Navy, and that ——— said I made it seem improbable, because I put it in such an extreme way. Now I contend, on the other hand, that the case does not admit of being stated in any way but the very strongest, and I know quite well that one of the chief difficulties to be got over is just exactly that easy-going way of saying that a thing must be untrue because it looks so startling.

"But I believe it is only a question of time, and I, and those who take up this naval business, have only got to go on pegging away, and we shall at last get people to believe that it is just the magnitude of the charges which makes them so serious.

"There is all the difference in the world between stating a case strongly and overstating it. If one's facts are wrong, that is another matter ; but, if people will only pay attention to accusations when they are watered down to suit preconceived ideas, there would be, it seems to me, little hope of improvement.

"However, my M., I don't know why I should have bothered you with all this long justification ; for if only you will approve—as you say you will—and will help me, I don't mind about anybody else ; and I will, moreover, appoint you as my special confidential Minister, charged with the duty of toning down all my too ill-tempered effusions. Only—you must leave me my *facts* !"

CHAPTER IV

Marriage—Work at Cassell's—*The Citizen Reader*—The Death of W. E. Forster—Mr. Gladstone and Home Rule—Darlington and Dewsbury Elections—Books and Articles: "The Flying Watkin," *In a Conning Tower, This World of Ours*—Friendship of W. E. Henley—Organisation of the Printing Trade—*Our Home Army*—A Letter from Lord Randolph Churchill.

IN the autumn of 1884 a great change took place in Oakeley's life and work. In order to make our marriage more immediately possible, he gave up the less certain prospects that the Bar held out, and accepted a post that was offered to him by Mr. Galpin, the senior partner of the publishing firm of Cassell & Company.

Entering the firm at first as secretary to the Company, he soon altered and increased the scope of his activity by undertaking the entire management of their educational department. A few years later he was asked to join the Board, and became one of the directors of the company. Our marriage took place in 1885. My father, Nevil Story-Maskelyne, was for many years Member for the Cricklade or Northern Division of Wiltshire. He was an old friend of William Forster, and a friendship and affection of very long standing also existed between him and Matthew Arnold, dating back to their Oxford days, and to days but little later when *Poems by A.* first appeared, and Nevil Maskelyne was one of their earliest admirers.

We settled in London after our marriage, first in Onslow Houses, and afterwards in Evelyn Gardens and in Westminster, spending always a considerable part of every year with my father at Bassett Down, our old home in Wiltshire.

Oakeley threw himself with great vigour into his new calling as a publisher. It was very characteristic of him that, in order to know and understand his new trade

thoroughly, he set himself at once to learn the art of the compositor and printer. He used to exhibit with pardonable pride a little book that was written, "composed," and printed by himself. The special knowledge thus obtained stood him in good stead some years later, when he had to take a leading part in the adjustment of intricate technical questions in the printing trade.

The education department, which was very small, and which, indeed, hardly had a separate existence when he took charge of it, gradually became one of the most widely known and most successful departments at Cassell's.

The production of books for the use of English school children, the best that he could devise and get written, was the part of his work there that gave him real interest and pleasure, and that fitted in with cherished ideas. To get such books written, however, was no easy task, and the ideal book for children is still a rare thing to find.

The first book of this kind for which he saw a great need, and which he eagerly desired to see written, was one which should teach to the children in our schools some of their duties, responsibilities, and privileges as future citizens, and show them something of how the country is governed.

No such book then existed. He had a very clear idea of what it should be like, and though at first he intended to get it written if possible by an expert, it soon became clear that he had such definite ideas of the lines on which it should be constructed, of the very examples which might be used, and the illustrations which should make it attractive, that it would be little trouble to write down the chapters that he had already realised so vividly.

The *Citizen Reader*, which has since gone through more editions, I believe, than any other schoolbook, was indeed the expression of his own mind and thoughts. "It describes," as Mr. Forster wrote in a preface to it, "the principles and purpose of our institutions and the machinery of our administration, and it tells children what ought to be the principles which should actuate them as patriotic citizens. The last aim is, without doubt, a difficult one. It is not easy to fulfil it without affronting prejudices, and, indeed, honest convictions. But I think any unbiased reader will admit that

there is little if anything in this book which will not be accepted by men of all creeds and parties."

That the little book was so accepted by men of all creeds and by the Press of both parties gave real pleasure to its writer. But the praise which he liked best came from the children for whom it was written, and nothing gave him more delight than to hear, as he so often did, of children who insisted that his books were "*real* books, not lesson books"—books that they wanted to take home and read for themselves, not only to be read in their class at school.

Men differing so widely as John Ruskin, John Bright, Cardinal Manning, and George Meredith agreed in commending it with equal warmth. John Bright, writing from One Ash, Rochdale, February 1886, ordered some hundreds of copies "to distribute to the more advanced scholars in the schools of this town and of the immediate neighbourhood. I have read it with much interest, and I think it may be of very great service, though," he adds, as though remembering suddenly that he was in truth a good Quaker, "I must say there is more of favour, almost of enthusiasm, in its dealing with military and naval questions than I can unite with."

"Your *Citizen Reader*," wrote another strong and lifelong Liberal, William Arnold, then the young and able sub-editor of the *Manchester Guardian*, "strikes me as a happy thought, very well carried out. It will do something to make young England realise that there is such a thing as a *Patria*, and in these days that is worth doing. The reaction from Dizzy's Jingoism has produced an awful kind of anti-patriotic cant which has become so much the thing among the Radicals that it is one of the chief signs of Liberal orthodoxy."

From another point of view M. Paul Blouet (Max O'Rell) wrote:—

"May 1, 1887.

"DEAR SIR—I owe you many thanks for kindly sending me the *Citizen Reader*, perhaps the most useful little book it has been my good fortune to read. Much as I admire the whole of the book, I cannot help telling you that the chapter on 'Our Duty to Foreigners' is the part that I prefer. If children were taught at school how to respect foreigners, future generations would be greatly benefited. Cf. your delightful book with the standard geography placed in the hands of the

children of England, in which they are taught to believe that ‘in France one-third of the mothers are unmarried’!!!

With renewed thanks for the pleasure you have given me.—I am,
 dear sir, yours very truly, PAUL BLOUËT (Max O'Rell)."

After the *Citizen Reader* had been in use for a year or two in English schools, the Japanese Government sent an order for some hundreds of copies for the schools in Japan. More were presently required, and instead of repeating the order, the thrifty Japanese had the book set up and printed in Tokio in exact facsimile of the English edition, letter-press, pictures, advertisements, all being faithfully and perfectly reproduced.

The preface to the *Citizen Reader*, written in January 1886, was almost the last work accomplished by William Forster; for in September 1885 his long last illness had begun. Hopes alternated with fears; he rallied sometimes, but his strength was unequal to the long strain, and the end came on April 5th.

At a moment of great danger in the long illness, Oakeley wrote to me: "It is a very, very bitter sorrow to me, my M. I do trust that I may at least have learnt from the great and beautiful spirit which seems slipping away, to be able to follow, though at a long distance, the example of his generosity and love."

The singular purity and uprightness of his father's public life, his independent judgment, his deep love of his country were calculated to have an enduring influence on Oakeley's mind, and William Forster's private life, and his relations to all those round him, were so lovable and beautiful as greatly to deepen those influences and impressions.

Mr. Forster had always insisted on a man's right to keep an independent judgment in political matters, and on the duty of making even loyalty to party ties subordinate to deep personal convictions. In the anxious weeks and months of political crisis and change which immediately followed his death, his example of straightforward loyalty to his convictions helped many other men in making their difficult choice between the claim of a political principle which they believed to be a vital one, and the claim of a

great party and a great leader whom they had hitherto trusted and followed.

A few hours after the funeral service of Mr. Forster in Westminster Abbey, Mr. Gladstone rose in his place in the House of Commons to explain the outlines of his Home Rule policy. The months that followed saw the beginning of the long struggle between Mr. Gladstone and the opponents of Home Rule ; the struggle in which the old Liberal party was so much injured and divided as to be for years weakened by the blows it received, and in the throes of which the future Unionist party was born.

During the preceding winter it had been generally known that Mr. Gladstone was seeking for a solution of the vexed problem of Irish government, and that he was anxiously balancing the pros and cons of Home Rule. Many considerations no doubt moved him, many schemes were no doubt weighed. As Lord Morley has said : " We know now in which direction the main current of Mr. Gladstone's thought was setting," but until April the world was still in the dark as to the scheme he would propose. Writing in the month of January, Oakeley expresses the anxiety that many were feeling :—

" I am so far in agreement with the new policy that I believe under certain clearly defined conditions Home Rule might be the best thing for Ireland ; and I admit that it is only the proper fulfilment of Liberal principles to permit the majority of the inhabitants of a country to govern themselves. Thus far I am in agreement with public sentiment in this matter. But at this point I confess my reasoning ceases to follow the accepted course. Every one appears to admit that any concession of self-government to Ireland must be accompanied by adequate precautions for the protection of honest and loyal men in that country. . . . It is generally added that it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to provide such protection, and there the matter usually rests. Now I prefer to invert this order, and to say that absolute and adequate protection must be the condition precedent to the grant of Home Rule. If the former be impossible, then the latter must go by the board. . . . As a Liberal and a believer in self-government, I would give

Home Rule ; but as an Englishman and a member of a great nation I would make the grant of this administrative reform entirely subordinate to the higher and far more important duties which we owe to ourselves and to all those who have relied upon us."

The question of the guarantees to be given to the loyalists in Ireland was to him the primary and absolutely essential one—guarantees to the purchasers under the Land Acts, to the constabulary, to the civil service, and to all men and women who still desired to live under the rule of England, and who had invested their property and undertaken their life's work in Ireland.

"For all these classes," he writes, "I would demand absolute and effectual guarantees. There is something, however, more valuable than money, and that is life. We are dealing with dreadful realities, and not with debating society questions. If the public once realised, as we who have seen the thing face to face have realised, the sordid and dreadful details of the Land League crimes, we should not have to plead as we do for the protection of honest men in Ireland.

"I want people to understand that in fact at this very day there is existing within twenty-four hours' journey from London a state of lawless and barbarous terrorism, brought about, if Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues are to be believed, by the operation of the very men to whom it is proposed to hand over the government of Ireland. Such are the dangers to be guarded against, such are the persons on whose behalf guarantees are demanded. The question is—Will such guarantees be insisted upon in the proposed settlement? Is it possible to rely upon them if they are obtained?"

To all those who thought as Oakeley did on the Irish problem there was only one answer to be given to these questions when the provisions of the Bill were made known, and that was a clear and definite one. The guarantees offered seemed to them to be totally inadequate and illusory. It is not wonderful that, feeling as strongly as he did, he should have thrown himself with passionate ardour into the long contest that followed.

The action of the eighty Liberals who voted against the

second reading of the Bill was followed by Mr. Gladstone's appeal to the country; and the General Election of 1886 was fought on the Home Rule issue. Oakeley consented to stand for Darlington against Sir Theodore Fry, who held the seat with a majority of 1500.

At the beginning of the election contest he wrote: "We had an excellent meeting last night; Goschen made a good speech and the meeting was thoroughly friendly. It is very creditable to Darlington that it should have furnished two meetings of over two thousand each on the same night. I met John Morley at York, and he told me that he thought he must come and 'look after me' here, a compliment which I appreciate. I expect to be beaten by *928 votes!* but I do not say this. I wish I had only got more time." A few days later he wrote: "I do not in the least expect to get in, but I am going to run Fry a good deal closer than I thought possible at first. The workers are excellent; Mr. Backhouse might be my own father, he is so kind and so helpful. I have just held my thirty-fifth meeting and I have two more to-day."

When the polling day came the excitement of both parties was great when it was found that the Unionist candidate had come within 57 votes of victory.

"Mr. Bright tells me that he thought very highly of my election address," Oakeley wrote just after the election was over, "and that he read it carefully twice. I had a long talk with him, and he is very keen about the Irish pamphlet, which he had bought and read."

A letter from another honoured member of the Society of Friends gave great pleasure to Oakeley at this time:—

"Dear friend," wrote John Bellows of Gloucester, "I have received the enclosed from James Rutledge of Great Brook Street, Birmingham, with a request that I will send it to thyself: evidently under the impression that I know thee. I am sorry I do not: for I greatly admire the sound ring of thy published letters on the Irish conspiracy, which would soon be hopelessly at an end if there were many of the same mind.

But apart from this I have—I was going to use a strong word, and say a great reverence for the name thou bearest. William and Anna Forster were the means of my father and mother becoming 'Friends'; for when I was a child they several times visited Bradpole, when W. E. F.'s toys used to be taken out from the sanctum to which they had been consigned when he put away childish things—for me to play

with. He was eleven years old when I was there, I think. I recollect that my father told me that he once came to him, one day while he was at Bradpole, and said, 'William Bellows, this is my birthday!' 'How old art thou?' said my father. 'I'm eleven years old,' was the reply. How often I think of his noble spirit, now that he is gone from the battle, in the forefront of which he would else be standing at this hour. —I am thy friend,

JOHN BELLOWES."

Oakeley spoke on the Irish question in many English constituencies, and in Scotland, in this year and the years that followed. He went over also twice to address great meetings in Belfast and Dublin. The problem of our responsibility to our fellow-subjects in the north of Ireland was a question on which he felt keenly, and on which he often dwelt in speaking to English audiences. His strong sympathy with Ulstermen in their attitude towards the Home Rule Bill that so gravely threatened their position and their liberty, is expressed in the following letter written to his sister Florence Vere O'Brien:—

"Ulster has a splendid part to play, if only it is properly led. The key of the whole situation is really in the hands of the Ulster people. All they have to do is distinctly to formulate their ultimatum to this effect: 'We positively refuse to pay any tax, or to obey any law imposed or passed by a Dublin Parliament, to the creation of which we have never assented, and to which we owe neither respect or obedience. If you want to make us pay or obey, try and do it.' Now it is a simple fact that there is no Minister in this country (except possibly Gladstone) who would have the folly or effrontery to try and coerce Ulster into abandoning the Union. No Ministry would last an hour which tried it; and no regiment in the British army would stir an inch to carry out decrees framed by, or in the interests of, Parnellite administration. Of this last fact I am now certain. Ulster, therefore, has only got in the long run to say 'We wont,' and there is an end of all the schemes for her humiliation."

He contested one other election that was in its nature a "forlorn hope." A bye-election occurred at Dewsbury in 1888; the Unionist leaders were determined that, if possible, no seat should be left unfought, and Oakeley undertook the contest, knowing beforehand how great were the

odds against making any great reduction in the Gladstonian majority. *

The cheerful optimism that could survive even the experience of a bye-election in Dewsbury finds expression in this letter to his mother written the day after the poll:—"We took up the battle in the most Gladstonian borough in the most Gladstonian corner of England. We fought against a very strong local man who had been nursing the place for two years. I came here only a fortnight ago, quite unknown, and unaided by any sort of organisation. In the face of all this we have reduced the Gladstonian majority by 260, and, what is much more important, we have added 1200 votes to the Unionist poll. . . . We have made many hundreds of clear conversions, and every day we make more. This place has never been properly taught or properly fought, and the whole question has to be begun from the very beginning. We have now put heart and hope into the party, have aroused enthusiasm, and created an organisation. If all this can be done in Dewsbury, what may not be accomplished elsewhere? I can truly say that I do not consider a moment of the time here wasted.

"As to the friendship, the sincere and unstinting help I have had from every friend here, high and low, rich and poor, I cannot speak of it too warmly. The contest has indeed brought me into contact with an amount of generous and ungrudging self-sacrifice, and has revealed to me an extent of kindness and ready help which will always gild the gloomy outlines of the material Dewsbury with a very bright and golden light. I cannot tell you how much I have to thank the people here for, and how sincerely grateful I am to them for what they have done, and the way in which they have done it."

The *Citizen Reader* was followed by a similar book for children, called the *Laws of Everyday Life*, which, though it did not have the immense circulation of its predecessor, passed through several editions, and won praise for the clear description and easily understood examples that it gives of the laws which govern our lives and which govern the society we live in; the laws of supply and demand, of work and wages, of co-operation, trades unions, and of prices.

These books always necessitated work and reading, and he was always eagerly searching for illustrations for them, and for examples which should help to make the truths he wanted to teach not only clear but arresting. His geography book, called *This World of Ours*, was, I think, his own favourite. Certainly it cost him much trouble and labour, and he was proportionately pleased when praise was given to it.

He believed that the various branches of geography cannot usefully be studied apart from one another, that political, historical, and military geography must be studied in relation to physical geography, that commercial and statistical geography must go hand in hand with knowledge of such questions as climatic conditions, that these can only be understood when the use has been learnt of instruments by which temperature, barometric pressure, etc., are measured and that a map is not half understood without some knowledge of the principles of map-making and a clear comprehension of the relation between any given portion of the earth's surface and the printed plan on which its geographical values are recorded. When this book was written, these ideas were comparatively new and unfamiliar, for the teaching of geography had not then been vitalised, and given the importance it has since acquired, owing to the illuminating methods of Mr. Mackinder and other teachers.

The examples which illustrate every lesson and page are drawn from sources familiar to English readers. The geographical circumstances of our country made this comparatively easy. "Washed by a great ocean stream, possessing a climate which presents almost every variety of temperature, with a geology which seems a compendium of the geology of the world; the centre of an empire which contains men of every race and products of every kind; with a history crowded with incident, chequered by innumerable changes, and yet continuous, England presents an ideal series of object-lessons to the geographical student."

The lessons that are given on maps and their uses, on the use of latitude and longitude and the simpler rules of navigation, the vivid examples given of historical fact together with geographical explanation, and such chapters as

those on "Geography and Human Life" and "A Lesson from Bradshaw" are calculated to awaken fresh interest in a reader's mind and to show geography in a new and attractive light; as a study, one of the most fascinating, he always thought, that could be undertaken,—"one that can be followed with pleasure and profit at all times and in all places, which makes travelling a perpetual enjoyment, and staying at home a perpetual opportunity."¹

The study of geography that this book entailed impressed deeply on Oakeley's mind the need that existed for an English atlas that should be as perfect of its kind as science, experience, and technical skill could make it. That it should be not the atlas only of the rich, but should be published at a price that should bring it within the reach of all, was his great desire and ambition. With this object in view he paid more than one visit to the principal German publishing firms who were at that time producing the finest European maps. He was eventually able to arrange for the adaptation and translation into English of Dr. Andrée's fine atlas.

Published at first as the *Universal Atlas*, it was afterwards taken over by the *Times*, and in enlarged and perfected editions it became very widely known as *The Times Atlas*.

To every successive edition Oakeley gave much time and thought. The beauty, clearness, and scientific accuracy of the maps, the arrangement of the book, and the perfection of its indexing won it widespread praise and recognition. A fine English version of the German school atlas published by Velhagen and Klasing was also produced in this country under Oakeley's guidance and editorship, and was published under the title *The London School Atlas*.

Besides his books he was writing articles from time to time for the Reviews and for the *St. James's Gazette*, and once or twice for *Murray's Magazine*, then just started by his cousin Edward Arnold. In this magazine his naval sketch, "In a Conning Tower," first appeared. It was republished in many editions and in five different languages, but it came out first anonymously in *Murray*, and few experiences gave Oakeley more amusement than going to a naval review a

¹ *This World of Ours*.

few weeks after its publication, and having “In a Conning Tower” warmly pressed on his notice by his friends in the service. He described joyfully how three naval men had separately offered him a copy to read, how the supposed author, a captain high in the service, had been pointed out with pride by “one who knew,” and how the homeward journey had been enlivened by a fellow-traveller who insisted on reading portions aloud!

The sketch describes an action between two modern ironclads. It pictures the terrible strain on the nerve and judgment of the captain which only the strongest natures will be able to endure.

“I’ve been to the manœuvres off Ireland,” wrote Mr. Rudyard Kipling some years later, “reading your *In a Conning Tower* with real appreciation. It ought to be read by every one as I read it—with a battleship cleared for action just cutting across the bows, and all hands ready for business. But do you believe in rams as much as you did—and if so, why? I’m doubtful on this point, and, since my experience in a destroyer’s trial trip, incline to the subtle torpedo.”

The type of ship represented by the *Majestic* of the story was that of H.M.S. *Victoria*. After the fifth edition of the *Conning Tower* had appeared the terrible calamity to H.M.S. *Victoria* occurred. The blow of the ram and the damage done to the two ships in the story corresponded very closely with the facts recorded in the tragedy of the *Victoria* and *Camperdown*.

Amongst the articles contributed to the *St. James’s Gazette* at this time was one called “The Flying Watkin,” which also gave us some amusing experiences. Sensational accounts of the great “race to the north” on two of our most important railway lines had been filling the pages of magazines and of newspapers. The special correspondent and the interviewer had been busy, and their accounts of their journeys to Edinburgh by the new expresses did not suffer from lack of colour and picturesque detail.

“The Flying Watkin” was received with a burst of enthusiasm by the long-suffering travellers on the railway line that was here described, and our occasional journeys

on it were enlivened by hearing the article quoted by fellow-passengers as a local classic so well known that further explanation was unnecessary. That this anonymous contribution to an evening paper was read aloud at the Board meetings of two at least of our great railway companies also gave its author great amusement.

August 14th, 1888

A TRIP IN "THE FLYING WATKIN"

It was high noon as I stood on the platform at Gravesend Station. There was a certain sense of bustle and agitation in the air, but nothing sufficient to indicate that the "Flying Watkin" was about to start on its marvellous journey to the west. The driver of the engine was chatting unconcernedly with an acquaintance; the fireman was quietly mending the connection of one of the valves with a piece of stout string; the guard had not yet put in an appearance; and but a few of the passengers who were to share with me the risks of the forthcoming journey had arrived.

There was time for me to look round and make a note of the perfection which modern science has introduced into the appliances for abridging time and space. I could not help feeling proud of my country. The very train itself was an example of that English desire to gratify every idiosyncrasy and to be independent of every hard-and-fast rule, which so favourably distinguishes us from the hide-bound pedants of the Continent. There were no fewer than fifteen vehicles composing the train; and such was the evident desire of the directors to meet and to gratify every taste, that of this whole number only two carriages bore the slightest resemblance to each other in height, colour, form, or fitting. And indeed the resemblance between the last two vehicles—which chanced to be a cattle van and a third-class carriage respectively—may more fairly be attributed to accident than to design. There was an evident determination to try all systems, and to give the public the advantage of assisting at the trial.

The "Flying Watkin," as every one knows, is due to start at 12.15; and as that hour drew near I could not help feeling amazed at the calm confidence displayed by the officials as the crisis approached. So confident were they of their powers that the hand of the clock pointed to ten minutes after the hour and some thirty milk-cans which awaited transmission still stood beside the empty van. Would they be on board in time? It seemed almost incredible. But the excitement which I felt was plainly in no wise shared by the officials, and what appeared to me to be a probability struck them in the light of a certainty, for it was not till 12.15 that the loading commenced. As the time for departure approached, there was naturally a certain amount of commotion among the passengers, some of whom were,

like myself, carried away by the almost romantic nature of the journey on which we were to embark.

In France or in Germany there would have been a display of some kind, and the officials would have been the first to participate in the excitement of the moment. But here we were in England, and every man in the company's uniform felt that this was neither the time nor place for any exhibition of emotion. The moment had arrived, the hand of the clock pointed to fifteen minutes past twelve, and closing the door of my compartment, I composed myself for the coming leap into space. I had time to become thoroughly composed, for I had forgotten that the milk-cans were not on board. Not even the “Flying Watkin” can leave so valuable a cargo behind. However, with the resolute enterprise which distinguishes our railway companies, this difficulty is eventually surmounted, and all seems ready for an actual start. It is now 12.20, and if the two gentlemen who are consuming a final half-pint in the refreshment room can be induced to take their places, we might be well under weigh. A short conversation between the loiterers and the guard results in the former entering their compartment, and the guard himself gives the shrill whistle which is the signal for our departure. Then, with a cool collected air characteristic of his profession, the driver puts over his lever and opens the valves. The result is not immediately satisfactory, and I must admit that the effect of our performance is somewhat marred by the necessity for reversing the engine and setting back the train before the wheels begin to revolve in the desired direction. Now, however, we are fairly off. It is 12.25 and we are due at Northfleet in six minutes. But we are not yet in full running trim, and the line rises slightly between the two stations. Still even now we must be doing a good twelve miles an hour, and if we keep this up we shall have lost little time when we get to Northfleet. Unfortunately steep gradients do not allow of high speeds, and it is 12.33 before we draw up at the Northfleet platform—two miles and a quarter in eight minutes. It is impossible to run trains at a high rate of speed and to allow a long period for stoppages. Two minutes after reaching Northfleet we are again *en route* and are soon dashing into the tunnel which separates us from Greenhithe, our next stage, four and a quarter miles from the starting-point.

The time is now 12.38. Between Greenhithe and Dartford the engine has got well into its swing, and a plentiful supply of steam is blowing off at the joints of half a dozen pipes. The rapidity of the motion is easily discerned from the oscillation of the carriage; and the heavy slopping of the oil in the lamp-glass, with an occasional fall of a drop of the fluid on to the floor of the compartment, tells us that travelling by the “Flying Watkin” has its perils as well as its pleasures. At 12.51 we are steaming proudly into Dartford Junction; but we have a long spell still before us, and, like the hurrying train in which we are borne along, we must abridge space and hasten to our conclusion. Not a moment's time is lost in the next stretch to Crayford—one mile and three quarters in five minutes; but the South-Eastern is accustomed to high speeds, and we make nothing of it. At this rate,

if maintained, we should reach Edinburgh within the week, and should accomplish the shorter journey from London to Rugby within the narrow limits of a winter's day.

We run through Bexley at a high speed. If the platform had been longer, or if our brakes had worked better, we should not have overshot the station, and been under the necessity of going back to it. New Eltham, Eltham, and Lee are left behind with bewildering rapidity; train leaving the last station at 1.30 exactly, barely twenty minutes after time—sixteen miles and a quarter in ninety minutes. At this point, however, there are, unfortunately, one or two delays, owing to the presence of two passenger trains and a goods on the line between New Cross and St. John's. The untoward incident tends to reduce somewhat our fine running average, and we do not get away from New Cross until five minutes past two. But our engineer is not to be beaten; there is a clear run between New Cross and London Bridge. Now is the time for him to show what a South-Eastern engine can do, and to keep up the reputation of the "Flying Watkin." With his whistle in full blast he opens the valves to their fullest extent, and with a maddening motion the train speeds along, the pace rising, as I time it by the telegraph posts, from twenty miles to twenty-five—from five-and-twenty to thirty; and even now the velocity appears to be on the increase. I must confess that for the moment I hide my head in my hands, and it is with an extraordinary sense of relief that I raise it again as the gallant train draws up unscathed at the London Bridge platform, having actually surpassed the official requirements and gained half a minute upon this extraordinary run.

From London Bridge to Cannon Street, and from Cannon Street to Charing Cross the journey is probably familiar to many of your readers, and, omitting the detentions, we barely lose more than the ordinary ten minutes in our attempts to leave and enter the two stations in question. At 2.15 exactly the "Flying Watkin" draws up at the platform of Charing Cross; having accomplished without a mishap its wild rush through the heart of Kent, across crowded Surrey, and into busy Middlesex. On a journey of an hour and a half scarce thirty minutes behind its time, and the whole distance, no less than twenty-four miles, accomplished in 120 minutes!

Your readers may be interested to know something of the locomotive by which this fine performance was achieved. There is nothing very remarkable about it, it being one of the ordinary South-Eastern six-wheel, or bone-shaker type. It bears the date 1850, and has many of the improved appliances which had been introduced up to that date. The fact that an engine which, comparatively speaking, cannot be called of the latest construction, should be capable of taking the "Flying Watkin" is a proof of the accuracy with which the South-Eastern directors foresaw the part which they were destined to play in the railway development in the country. As I passed up the platform I met Mr. M——, the well-known chairman of an important line connecting London and Edinburgh. He had been a fellow-passenger with me in the "Flying Watkin." "Good-day, Mr. M——"

said I; "a wonderful performance, was it not?" "Wonderful indeed!" replied Mr. M—— with fervour,—"Marvellous!" "You have nothing like this on your Northern lines?" I suggested. With a candour which did him credit, the chairman admitted that my statement was correct. "But," said I, "you have great experience of railway management; you know what this sort of thing means. It is wonderful, no doubt, but can it last? Can they keep it up?" Mr. M—— shook his head thoughtfully. "I cannot tell," said he; "it seems almost impossible that this sort of running should be maintained. I may frankly own that we could not venture to do it for a week; it would ruin us. But then you must remember that we have not the traditions of the South-Eastern. Years of practice have enabled them to accomplish this feat; their passengers have got accustomed to it. And with such an organisation as theirs even the "Flying Watkin" may be kept on the road for years to come; but I must be going, for I am dining in York this evening." I thanked Mr. M—— for his courtesy, and remembered that I too was expected that night at Gravesend. It was getting late, and I was pressed for time. There was nothing for it but to forego my intended trip by the return "Watkin," and leaving the station, I walked quietly home.

In a letter to his sister, Mrs. Vere O'Brien, he writes about Mr. Forster's *Life*, which was then just published:—

"April '88.

"I have had you very much in my thoughts just now, for I have been reading your contribution to father's *Life*, the proofs of which have been sent to me by Reid. I like both what you say and the way you say it very much, and my only regret is that there is not more of your handiwork in the book. Not that you must suppose I do not think the book excellent. I think the style simple and in perfectly good taste, while the life itself and all the letters are of supreme interest to me, and I think will also prove to be so to a very large number of readers. To many I am certain it will throw a new light upon father's life and character. Much, of course, of the actual facts and correspondence will be new to us too, but will only be fresh illustrations of his high and beautiful qualities which we knew so well. I am sure many people knew and felt that he was a greater man than nine-tenths of his contemporaries, but could hardly have explained to themselves whence the difference sprang. Now they will see that his life was all of a piece, and that its level from beginning to end was far higher than that of most modern English statesmen.

"What a wonderful thing a little *singularity* in the circumstances of a man's early bringing up seems to be. It may, of course, do harm only, but at any rate it prevents a man becoming just like everybody else, and accepting every convention without giving one genuine thought to what is at the bottom of it.

"In father's case every bit of singularity worked, I think, for good. But then it must be remembered that all that was singular in his surroundings was also very distinguished both morally and intellectually. Of course the great and inevitable gap in the book, the omission which makes Hamlet with Hamlet left out seem a complete and finished work beside it, is the absence of all reference to Mother; to her part in his life, and to her influence over his thought. You and I were always agreed, I know, that it was the compound of the two natures, the mature wisdom of two different strains of thought about high things, that gave the unrivalled beauty and wisdom to their lives which we saw so much of, and felt so often. That omission is inevitable, of course; but there it is gaping at one!

"I am writing a paper for Ted. Quite a new line for me, for it is to be a work of imagination, and to be entitled 'In a Conning Tower.' It is intended to represent the feelings of a modern naval officer going into action in one of the new ironclads. It really ought to be written by Victor Hugo, but that is out of the question. I have no notion what sort of a 'job' I shall make of it, but M. and I are very busy with it. A flight into the realms of fancy is a new thing for me, as you know, and I think I shall soon return to my fact-grubbing habits, for I have in my mind a paper on French protective duties and their effect on the prices of food. It will be a very hard bit of work, but Admiral Maxse has supplied me with a very valuable set of statistics which a French friend of his has compiled in answer to a set of questions propounded by me.

"Little Mervyn is as bonny as a bird, and is thriving wonderfully. M. says he has grown two pounds this month; at which rate I calculate that by the time he reaches forty-eight he will weigh something over half a ton. This is growth indeed!

" You know I always have a plan of keeping my intellect sweet, and preventing my mind from being absolutely fuddled away with newspaper articles, bad manuscripts, facts about guns, outrages, railway rates, and what not. My plan consists of having some piece of sane literature on hand, which I can read at all intervals, in the train, while I am dressing, and so on. Shakespeare is a great stand-by, and anything which is a hundred years old in itself, or in its subject-matter, serves the turn tolerably well.

" At present I am in the middle of a 'Walter Scott' revival, and most satisfying and delightful it is. I have finished *Quentin Durward* and *Anne of Geierstein*, and now I am half-way through *Guy Mannering*. Cannot you well remember reading this aloud with Mother? It was one of the novels I enjoyed most. As far as I know it is the only famous novel where the hero is nearly fifty and a father !"

Oakeley began to write for William Henley in the earliest days of the *Scots Observer*, and he wrote also for its successor, the *National Observer*. He was one of the group of friends whom Henley drew to himself by the attraction of his singular gifts and great personality. Henley, no doubt, made many enemies also, for it was impossible to remain indifferent to one whose individuality was so striking, and who was ever so keen and fierce a fighter? But how good was his friendship! how vivid his talk! how unforgettable those nights, when we lost count of time, and morning came, while Henley talked on! At that time Henley's speech gave a greater sense of latent force than almost any that I have heard. The rapier-like swiftness of it, his judgment weighed and balanced, the quick humour, above all, the sense that he gave of the fulness and gladness of life; and of a spirit undaunted by long suffering or by the pain and sorrow it had endured. His friendship was too memorable to pass over unrecalled, and Oakeley cared for it too greatly.

The following is one among many of Mr. Henley's characteristic notes :—

"STANLEY LODGE, MUSWELL HILL, N.,
November 9th, 1892.

"DEAR A.-F.—I had seen the squib and enjoyed it. But 'twas good of you to write, and I am glad indeed to get news of you, though it's of the vaguest.

No: I ain't happy just now. I've lost a whole long year and more, and I cannot be consoled. Influenza, an operation, influenza (or something like it) again, and brain-fag all the time. There are times when I wonder if I ever did anything at all, and especially if I shall ever do anything again.

We think of clearing out of this, and going to house our nothingness at Brighton. 'Tis pleasant enough in the leafy moons, but when the lights shorten, and the leaves come down, and the clay gives up its damp, then—well—then you wish you were somewhere else. I don't think you've ever seen it. Have you? If you haven't, why not see it?

The good time that it was, that of the N.O., wasn't it? I would it were ours again. The Bounder is afraid of nothing now. He and the Rotter range unchecked and undismayed. It would be worth some good man's while to turn us on again. If only I could get back a little of my old self. However! . . .—Yours always, W. E. H."

Many of the old numbers of the *Scots Observer* and *National Observer* contain articles written by Oakeley, on our ships or our armies, our coaling stations, or upon questions of South African policy, and other matters affecting our overseas possessions.

The five years previous to 1892, when he entered Parliament, were made very full by the extraordinary amount of work and energy that he managed to concentrate into his life. He was in sole charge of a large department at Cassell's, and the keen interest that he took in the details of their great business led him, in 1890, to take an active part in initiating and forming the Printing and Allied Trades Association—an association which included the heads of the great printing-houses in London. Until this association was made, no combined discussion or action had been possible. Each firm acted by itself and without co-operation. Shortly after its formation the necessity for its existence was clearly shown. A strike was announced by the leaders of the Printers' and Compositors' Union, and a readjustment of the scale of payments in force in the London district was demanded. The alterations asked for involved the intricate study of a great number of very

technical points, for the consideration of which time was needed. The new association enabled the employers to take the time that was essential ; they met as a united body ; the concessions and alterations that were made were made by all alike. A conference was arranged between the representatives of the Master-printers and the representatives of the London Society of Compositors, and the masters and men came finally to a permanent agreement.

To his Mother, written December 1890.

"The thing which I fear is most likely to keep me in London will be the Printing Association. We have a very formidable piece of work before us, and at present we are practically sitting every day. On Saturday morning I called a 'chapel' or meeting of all our compositors at Cassell's ; and explained to them fully the meaning and probable operation and effect of the new American Copyright Bill. Of course the men listened civilly enough, but it is very disheartening having to do with men who so distrust each other, and who pass on this distrust to any one in a position over them. I know that many of the men present were convinced that my object in speaking and making this explanation was in some way to play some trick on them, to seduce them from their allegiance to their Union, or to take some unfair advantage. Still it is absolutely necessary for their own sakes that they should know the facts. It is simply impossible to fathom their ignorance in respect to their own interests, beyond the next pay-day. I found that nine out of ten did not know what is contained in the notices they have given. They have no idea what they have asked, or why they have asked it. Their leaders have succeeded in driving literally three-fourths of the book-work out of London, and now they would get rid of the rest."

To the Same.

"Christmas, 1890.

"I am very hard at work on the compositors' scale. Our sub-committee sits every day for several hours, and we

have not got through all the clauses yet. But I am glad to say the men's leaders are coming to their senses, and have given up their original 'all take and no give' attitude. Not one compositor in twenty has the faintest idea as to what are the demands which have been made on their behalf, or why they have been made at all. We (Cassell's) have had to make all arrangements for doing all our book-work out of London. It is the inevitable consequence which must follow the concession of the new demand, not only in our house but in many others. I believe, from what I hear, that the men are beginning to understand what a dangerous game their leaders are playing, and that after all we shall be able to come to some reasonable arrangement."

In the discussions that were held, after much consultation and debate, the new scale of prices was drawn up. The settlement thus come to cost many weeks of anxious and constant toil, but it was so carefully considered and worded that it stood the test of time, and lasted without alteration for ten years.

During these years Oakeley was writing often in the *Times*. "I think that not a year has passed since 1872 in which I have not seen something of manœuvres by sea or by land, at home or abroad," he wrote at this time, and his contributions to the *Times* include the "log" that he wrote during the naval manœuvres which he accompanied from 1887 onwards, and include also a series of letters on the military situation, which sums up the conclusions he had come to as to the condition of our Home Army.

These letters, written for the *Times* in 1891, and published in book form in 1892, were the result of information given freely and constantly to him by officers of all ranks and of all branches of the Service, verified by his personal observation and study. No very lengthy or detailed examination of these can be given here; but it is necessary to speak of them with more than the passing reference which would be all that would be required were they but the ashes of some old and half-forgotten controversy, concerning details and defects of military organisation, having temporary significance, but whose importance has been lost with the passing of time. The present value of these letters,

written eighteen years ago, lies in the fact that the fundamental principles that they dwell upon, and on the importance of which they lay stress, are the principles that throughout his life he believed to be essential to all sound military teaching, which governed all criticism that he ever made on army affairs, and which formed the basis of his own beliefs and policy.

"The greatest difficulty that we experience," he wrote at this time, "in trying to convince others of the true condition of our Army is the impossibility of persuading them that the absurdities which exist can really and truly be perpetrated in the full view of an educated community. We are met with the objection, 'Surely that cannot be so; it is too ridiculous to be true.' To which the reply must be, '*Go and see.*' If only a Commission, composed of a doctor, a business man, and a soldier, could be conducted round our depôts and garrisons, and an impartial report made of their impressions after they had been shown the things that are to be seen; and still more important the things which ought to be seen but which do not exist, I think the truth could be made clear to the public."

"I make no pretension," he writes at the beginning of these letters, "to produce startling revelations or to disclose secrets. The whole point of my case is that the abuses of our Army system are perfectly well known to every officer in the Service. . . . I trust that no soldier will find fault with what is here written merely because to him it is a very old story—my object is to try and put before the general public some facts with regard to our military arrangements which the soldier knows and cares about, but which, as far as appearances go, the public either does not know, or does not care about. It has been made a matter of objection that I have had to use strong expressions and to make grave charges. It is said, 'The thing may be bad but it cannot be as bad as it is painted . . . our army system may not be perfect, but it cannot be an absolute failure.' The line of argument is specious, but in this case it is not entitled to prevail. Seven years ago strong things were said about the Navy. Charges were made by outside critics, and were indignantly denied or pooh-poohed by the officials. What has happened since? Thirty-two millions sterling have been voted by way of a special grant to the Navy. Over one hundred new ships have been added to the fleet. The system of dockyard administration has been revolutionised. The old Ordnance Department has been destroyed and a new one created. Thousands of men and boys have been added to the personnel. Either these heroic measures were necessary or they were not; assuming that they were necessary, what

condemnation could have been too sweeping for the officials who allowed the accumulation of arrears which could only be wiped out by such an effort? The sum of recent achievements is but a partial measure of previous deficiency.

The charge that was made seven years ago in respect of the Navy was that it was glaringly deficient. The charge was true, and the proof is to hand. The charge in respect of the Army is that it is glaringly inefficient; it will be for the public to judge whether the charge be true. But to dismiss the charge merely because it conveys a very serious indictment is not warranted by previous experience. I propose to do my best to prove that at the present moment the condition of our Home Army is radically and essentially bad. And further, I propose to demonstrate that, given our present system and our present organisation, it cannot in the nature of things be otherwise than radically and essentially bad.

It is indeed most important that the public should clearly understand that our military weakness is due not to accident or ill-luck, not to imperfect execution of a correct design, but that it is the natural and certain consequence of a faulty and ill-considered plan. The first point to which I wish to draw attention is the want of purpose on the part of those who direct our Army. No one, high or low, has as yet made up his mind what part the Army is to play—whether it is to be utilised solely for home defence, or to take part as a contingent side by side with Continental armies; whether it is merely to provide reinforcements for India, or whether it is to co-operate with the Navy in aggressive warfare. It is difficult, no doubt, to arrive at any certainty with regard to these points, or to organise a programme which circumstances may not render useless. But we have hitherto made no effort whatever to arrive at even a proximate solution of the question. Nothing is more striking in the report of Lord Hartington's Commission than the revelation of the total want of plan for effective action in the event of war. We have no officer at the head of a general staff; we have no scheme of combined operations between the two services; and we have no one with sufficient authority to formulate and give effect to such a scheme.

In the words of the report of Lord Hartington's Commission, 'There does not appear to exist sufficient provision by either Service for the wants of the other; little or no attempt has ever been made to establish settled and regular inter-communication or relations between the Services; no combined plan of operations for the defence of the Empire in any given contingency has ever been worked out or decided upon.' It is a truism to say, that as long as we do not know the purpose for which the Army is maintained, it is impossible efficiently to prepare it for the execution of its duty. It need hardly be said that the recommendations of Lord Hartington's Commission have remained, as the recommendations of most Army Commissions do, an absolute dead letter."

The necessity of a clear understanding and definition of what should be the function of the Army, and of what is the

purpose for which it was maintained, are emphasised in these pages; and so are the need for a closer and more scientific co-operation between the Army and Navy, and for a constant co-operation in their plans for the defence of the Empire. No answer to such problems had been attempted or formulated in 1890. It is unnecessary in 1909 to write about the importance to both services of the General Staff Organisation, or to dwell on the importance of the work of the Committee of Imperial Defence, which was created to supply the need spoken of in the report of Lord Hartington's Commission that is quoted above. In later chapters I shall attempt to show what part Oakeley took in the realisations of these ideas when the time came for the establishment of effective Staff Organisation, and for the creation of the Committee of Defence. The factors which in later years came to be recognised as some of the most important points of the organisation of the defences of the Empire were the points on which he concentrates attention in 1891, and they underlie all his assumptions as to the need of change and reform in the methods of the War Office and Admiralty, and their preparation for war. The letters go on to a more detailed examination of deficiencies which seemed to him grave in our Home Army. They lay stress on the need of more effective battle training to make the Army able to achieve success in war, on the existing recruiting system, on the quality of the recruits obtained by its means, and on the actual condition of our cavalry, infantry, and artillery. That this system for the recruitment, payment, and treatment of our soldiers was not in accordance with the common sense which we apply to our private business concerns, and could not reasonably be expected to produce good results, was the argument that he presses home on his fellow-countrymen.

"To those who think that we ought to have no Army I have nothing to say, except that I do not agree with them. But to every taxpayer I wish to point out that, while to have no Army and to pay nothing for it is reasonable, or to have a good Army and to pay twenty millions for it is reasonable, to pay twenty millions for an Army and not to get one is not reasonable, nor to be endured."

"I have read your pamphlet with very great interest," wrote Lord Randolph Churchill, "and I agree generally with its contents. I expect that the fighting efficiency of the services at the present moment is much what you describe. We have had largely increased expenditure without any appreciable reform of administration, and I feel certain that the prospects of such reform are extremely remote.

"Liberals and Tories have informed me that the House of Commons would consider without any reluctance or disfavour the scheme of reform sketched out in my memorandum similar to the one in your pamphlet. But official opinion is obdurate and puts it aside almost without argument. Under these circumstances all we can hope for is a vigorous non-intervention foreign policy, and that Ministers who talk about the 'ascendancy of England in the Councils of Europe' will have the sense and sanity to practise 'Peace at any price.' I return you the pamphlet with many thanks for sending it to me."

CHAPTER V

“We will not have Home Rule.”

Motto of the Ulster Convention.

Belfast and the Home Rule Question—West Belfast Election—Stories of the “Fighting West Division”—General Election, 1892—The House of Commons—Maiden Speech—The National Flag on the Victoria Tower—A serious ice accident.

OAKELEY'S connection with the Belfast constituency, which he was to represent for thirteen years in Parliament, began some years before his election in 1892. He spoke several times to Ulster audiences, and began to understand something of the character of his future constituents, and to realise how deeply they cared for principles which he looked upon as of the greatest importance in political life. His closer connection with West Belfast came about in 1890, wholly unsought by himself. Meetings to choose a Unionist representative were held by the Conservative, Liberal Unionist, and Orange bodies, and his name was agreed upon as one acceptable to all parties. Such agreement was not easily or lightly come to in Belfast; and though at first the idea of representing a constituency which would entail such strenuous work, and which was so distant from London, was not a welcome one, he finally accepted the call, and consented to contest the seat that was then held by Mr. Sexton. To try to win back this seat from one of the leaders of the Nationalist Party, who had taken so active a part as Mr. Sexton had done in the sinister work of the Land League, was in itself no unwelcome task.

The city itself, and the energy of the citizens who had built up its industries and prosperity, excited his interest and admiration, and he felt a real pride in being called on to represent these Northern Irishmen who had

brought into existence the great linen mills, and other thriving industries of the city; and who had created their docks, their harbours and shipbuilding yards in a situation which, though rich in natural beauty, can originally have offered but few facilities for these undertakings. The ability, the self-reliance, and energy which have made Belfast so unlike any Southern Irish town, would be remarkable in any country and are phenomenal in Ireland.

The constituency of West Belfast was one which differed so widely from any English or Scotch constituency in its political circumstances and history, that some description of it may not be out of place.

Belfast, which sends four members to Parliament, returned Unionist members for the North, South, and East divisions; and these divisions were looked upon as safe Unionist seats, the Nationalist minorities being too small to make a contest in them worth while.

The Western Division was, however, in a different position. When the Redistribution Act of 1885 altered the representation of the city, it was realised that if any of the four divisions were to be saved for the Parnellite party, the West was the only one where this would be possible; and its boundaries were framed so as to include the streets and blocks where the greatest number of Nationalist Roman Catholic voters lived. In Belfast the Nationalist-Catholic and the Unionist populations live, as much as may be, apart from each other. In some parts of West Belfast, when we first knew it, the dividing line was very sharply marked, and "Sandy Row" and "Shank-hill Road" were looked on as strong Unionist centres, whilst the "Falls Road" was almost exclusively occupied by Nationalists. There being no likelihood of turning either of the other Belfast seats from their Unionist allegiance, all the efforts of both parties were centred upon the "Fighting West" division, with results that gave an animation, not to say a fierceness, to its political contests that were far indeed removed from anything we had ever seen or heard of in English elections. The 1886 election had resulted in the return by a narrow majority of Thomas Sexton, one of the members of the Central Executive of

the Land League and National League. The succeeding years were spent by the Nationalist Party in trying to consolidate their success, and to make Mr. Sexton's position safe. Every house and every vote that either party could secure in "the West" became of importance. Our elections were said to be lost and won in the Registration Court, but their results were determined by the efforts of the working men, and, above all, of the working women of Belfast, who quietly took the matter into their own hands, and, at any cost to themselves, moved into each house that fell vacant in our debateable land, and at last by their determination converted the minority of 1886 into the solid Unionist majority of 1892. The deep earnestness of their convictions, the devotion which they showed, and their resolution never to be forced into accepting a Home Rule Government, made the basis of the strong and lasting sympathy between Oakeley and his constituents. In June 1892, the life of Parliament was drawing to a close, and the Home Rule policy of Mr. Gladstone was once more, after five years of Unionist administration, prominently before the country, as the chief question to be decided on by the electorate. A convention of representatives from every constituency in Ulster was summoned to meet in Belfast in this month, and with a single voice Ulster reiterated the determination of all her Protestant population that she "would not have Home Rule."

"The proceedings were very impressive," Oakeley wrote to his mother from Belfast after the convention. "The old Primate (he is eighty-two) read the prayer loud enough for all those round me to hear it. The singing of the psalm was very moving, some of the speeches quite admirable, Thomas Sinclair's by far the best of all. There could be no mistake as to the tone of the meeting, the emotion of all present, and the depth of feeling at the bottom. Several times the great audience rose to its feet and cheered, and it was always the plainest, and I think I may say the strongest, statements that brought the quickest response. But there was not a word of 'tall' talk from beginning to end, not a word that a good citizen may not say with a good conscience."

The general election followed in July. The contest in West Belfast was a very strenuous and very exciting one. The defeat of 1886 was still fresh in the minds of our people, and no efforts were thought too great to ensure the victory that they longed for.

Elections in Belfast were full of sharp contrasts, and abounded in experiences that would certainly surprise and startle any English agent or Member of Parliament. Nowhere else surely could such a combination be found of a deep and passionate seriousness, the outcome of political faith based, on both sides, on men's deepest religious convictions; with humours and situations, to us so strange, so delightful, so wildly improbable, as those which enlivened our contests in Belfast. Some of the scenes and incidents that marked them, and which I noted down at the time, were so unlike the ordinary experiences in an English constituency that they may not be without interest.

A lady who was canvassing for us came to tell me that, calling at the house of James — to secure his vote, she had found only a disconsolate woman, widowed some months past, and full of tearful details about James's end. As she passed down the street a little child ran up to her laughing, and said, "You talked to my mither, but my da was in bed." We met James — afterwards by appointment, at his place of business. He told us that he was a Protestant, his wife a Roman Catholic, and he implored us to be sure and send for him on the polling-day; for on the last occasion, "when I woke in the morning, I found the woman gone and the door locked upon me, and, savin' your presence, ma'am, not a stitch of clothes had the woman left me, only a pot of drink there was by the bedside—she had taken even the blankets." James's melancholy experience was repeated, and the rescue party who finally took him to the poll, wrapped in a blanket of their own providing, told me, with blushes, that the rescue had been an exciting one, for the "ladies of the district" had set upon them with pokers so effectually that a complete change of nether garments had been rendered necessary. "They were in strips, ma'am—they were indeed."

It is difficult just at first for the English mind to grasp the meaning of the expression we often heard, "It was a grand churchyard vote, it was that"; or our agent's pathetic murmur, "I would not have minded their trying to poll their own dead men, but they were polling ours as well"—and indeed, in one of our elections, a Nationalist, acting on this principle, not wisely but too well, recorded his vote in the name of the Grand Master of an Orange Lodge lately deceased.

The process is often ingenious. To poll the greatest possible number, every Nationalist, dead or alive, must record his vote. The Unionists watch the death-roll with jealous care to prevent this as far as they can. Our agent was visiting the houses in a small street. He knocked at the door of No. 5. "Is Michael Devlin still living here?" he asked of a little girl about twelve years old. "He is, sir," she replied. The agent passed on and said presently to a woman living in the street, "There seem to have been no changes here at all." "There are not, sir," she said, "except that poor Michael Devlin was taken just six weeks back." So the agent returned to No. 5, "Why did you tell me your father was still living here, little girl," he said, "when he died six weeks ago?" "Ach, sir," was the instant reply, "sure, I forgot." The agent was expected, the vote was to be saved, and the lie was ready.

Very different from these Nationalist Catholics were our supporters, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Covenanters, who seemed to me to have stepped straight out of the pages of Sir Walter Scott, and, strong in numbers and in influence, the much-maligned Orangemen. How characteristic was the description given to me by one of our "Orange" friends of the excellent Protestant education that he was giving to his son. "Brought up, Mrs. Forster, to follow in the steps of the Rev. Hanna, Johnstone of Ballykilbeg, and the Great Example." It seemed unintelligent to have to ask who the Great Example might be, but the reply for the moment was equally baffling. "Who, ma'am, but Him on the White Horse?" A little reflection led me to understand that no reference to the "Revelations" was intended, and that the Great Example was William the

Third "of pious, glorious, and immortal memory," represented in every picture and on every banner, as riding on a white charger across the River Boyne.

Many more stories of our Belfast election might be told if space permitted. It would not be easy to give an impression of the scenes of wild excitement and enthusiasm, amid which the announcement was made of the Unionist victory. The mountains that surround Belfast were lighted with bonfires, and down the principal streets of the city for two successive nights, bonfires blazed with impunity, in celebration of the delight of our people in having won back West Belfast "for the Union."

Harsh criticisms are sometimes passed by English politicians on the uncompromising nature of the political and religious beliefs of Ulster, and on the violence of their expression. But the circumstances under which those beliefs grew up can only be really understood by a study on the spot of the surroundings, the history, and conditions which have made the men and women of the north of Ireland what they are. Of Oakeley's feeling towards them some expression is to be found in his letter to his mother written on the day after his election.

"BELFAST, *July 7th*, 1892.

"DARLING MOTHER—The strain of this long struggle is over at last, and we have won a great and memorable victory.

"The first person to whom my thoughts turn, and to whom I must write is your dear self. I need hardly tell you how far above all the scores of other telegrams I have received from all quarters I value that short message from Wharfedale. And then there is one other from the beloved 'brother and sister,' who send their message from Ennis.

"Certainly all this outside triumph, pleasant as it is, would be nothing if it were not added to the love and sympathy I get from you and from my family.

"I do not deny that I am as pleased as a schoolboy to have won, simply for the pleasure of winning, and of having got what I wanted. But I can truly say that the uppermost feeling in my mind is that of the tremendous

responsibility and difficulty of the work which has been laid on my shoulders. This is no ordinary constituency ; the people, men and women, have worked, and prayed, and wept, and hoped for the victory which they have won. I can never do all that I ought for them. But I do believe that my knowledge of what these people are will do me good, and help to make me something like the kind of member of parliament which father would have wished me to be, and which you would like to see me.

"Our victory is great above all expectation. The people are mad with joy, but perfectly well-behaved.—Your very loving son."

In the letter that follows, he wrote to his mother, as he always wrote to her, with the perfect assurance of her understanding and sympathy, concerning his most intimate thoughts about the difficulties that he foresaw for himself, and the responsibility that he recognised in the Parliamentary life which was now to begin for him.

To his Mother.

"Written at sea, off CHERBOURG, July 30, '92.

". . . And now let me thank you, dearest mother, for your letter, and let me say that what has brought me down from the deck is the wish to write and tell you how very dear you are to me, and how specially I shall think of you on the 1st August, whether this letter reaches you on that day or not. I cannot tell you what a difference it makes to me, with my new responsibilities and possibilities, to know that I have you to share the pleasure with me, and to help me with the difficulties, which will be many. Some of the difficulties will come of themselves fast enough. Others will be of my own making if I do not take great care. One temptation I think I shall get the better of, that I mean of talking too much and too soon. In the first place I don't deny that the idea of opening my mouth at all in the House of Commons is a formidable one to me, and I shall have to muster up all my courage whenever I do face the ordeal. In the second place I am firmly

convinced that, save under very exceptional circumstances, the positive duty of a new member, who has any regard for his own interests, is to keep his eyes and ears open and his mouth shut for many weeks, and it may be months, after getting into the House. I am afraid I am more likely to get into trouble over some of my other failings. I shall have to try and avoid getting 'across' with people who are just as earnest and well-intentioned as myself. I shall have to avoid being bitter, and above all 'smart.' Also I shall have to overcome a failing which is not a vice, that of getting flurried and annoyed by hostile speeches. These are only a tithe of the pitfalls into which I may tumble. And, alas! human nature being what it is, to be forewarned of one's own deficiencies is not always to be forearmed against them. If that were the case indeed, I should be a most exemplary person, for no one could write a fuller and more accurate catalogue of his own shortcomings than I. Still, if you see me visibly slipping into any of the holes I have referred to, or into others, I shall most truly welcome a warning note from you. I think I have some advantages on my side. I have, or should like to have, a great respect for the House of Commons as an institution. I have a real and deep love for the country; and if I can see questions from a long way off instead of losing their proper perspective and getting 'muddled' by details and small issues, I think I can usually get a fair idea of what is worthy or unworthy from the national point of view. I have not ever yet suffered from the desire to make money for the sake of making it, nor do I think that I should become so wedded to Parliamentary life as to be incapable of leaving it decently. These two things ought to keep me fairly straight against temptations to sell my opinions. Only, of course, I know that temptations in the abstract are easily overcome, while, when they present themselves in a concrete form, it is quite a different matter. The terrible difficulty must be to know when to make a reasonable sacrifice of private opinions, for legitimate party needs, and when to stand out and go one's own way. I think the danger often is that men persuade themselves too easily that duty to their party demands

just what personal convenience and interest dictate. On such points you will be my wisest counsellor. . . .”

“HOUSE OF COMMONS LIBRARY, *4th August 1892.*

“MY DARLING MOTHER—It is only fitting that my first letter from this place should be to you. Certainly every step I have taken since I passed the gate in Palace Yard has brought back memories of the many occasions when dearest father brought me through the cordon of watchful guardians who made the approach to the House so difficult to an outsider.

“My long familiarity with the House as a visitor has, indeed, stood me in good stead, for not only do I know my way about, but I have found a smiling friend in almost every policeman. Nor is it wonderful, for it must now be nearly twenty-eight years since I first sat up in the Ladies’ Gallery and heard a debate on the American Civil War. Many a stormy and interesting scene have I witnessed in the House since that time, and I am sure you can understand that I enter now in my own right with many strong and moving emotions in my heart.

“I am writing this at half-past twelve, having come down early to take my seat beside T. W. Russell. Where one sits seems a small matter, but under present circumstance it has some real importance. Opinion among the Liberal Unionists seems to me to be rather divided as to what is the right place for them to take. Personally, I feel quite clear as to what is the right thing. Nothing but the severest pressure of party discipline will make me sit behind a Gladstonian Government which I have been returned to oppose and destroy. However, for the present, I propose to sit by Russell and Lea—what is good enough for them is good enough for me.”

In February 1893 Parliament met again. A recent election in the county of Meath had been the occasion of a contest between the Parnellite and Anti-Parnellite sections of the Nationalist Party. The campaign on behalf of the Anti-Parnellite candidate had been conducted by the priests of the district, who threw themselves into the contest with

great energy and determination, and whose electioneering methods gave rise to a judicial enquiry as to the legality of their proceedings. The enquiry revealed a story of intimidation and violence which was startling in the extreme. The pulpit and the altar had only too often been used in Ireland as a platform from which politics were taught, and political action dictated; but it may be doubted whether such a condition of affairs as that revealed by the Meath enquiry could be paralleled; and that a constituency so demoralised ought to be disfranchised and the chief offenders punished, was the conclusion to which many men on both sides of the House came. It was decided to move an amendment to the address calling attention to these disclosures.

It was moved by Oakeley in his first speech in the House. As he concluded his speech, Sir Charles Russell, then Attorney-General, wrote to him on a slip of paper, "I shall have to get up and crush you presently, but you have done well. My warm congratulations." In after years he never forgot the sense of help and support which, as a new member, and one to whom speaking always meant a severe nervous strain, he felt in Mr. Chamberlain's presence by his side throughout his speech; he never forgot this act of real kindness and encouragement, and often in after life when he was tired or suffering, and was urged to go out of the House to rest, he insisted on stopping to hear the speech of some young member; and told me that he would like to feel he had been able to "hand on" the kindness he had received to some other beginner.

In her letter to me, written on the following day, Mrs. Forster says: "That the speech should have won the praise of being both 'studiously moderate in tone and full of facts and careful research,' is exactly what one could most desire for my dearest Oakeley's first speech. How truly glad I am, and how present to me, almost more than anything, is the immense pleasure and interest and delight it would have been to dearest father! . . . Well, darling M., it has been a hard week to you both, and things are not likely to be less interesting or exciting as the Session goes on. . . .

"I enclose to-day's leader in the ——. It seems all but incredible that any one pretending to something of political knowledge, as the editor of a newspaper must do, should write in such a random and reckless way. 'Only give us a Bill—never mind what it is. It may ruin England, or it may ruin Ireland, or it may leave us quarrelling as hopelessly as ever, or it may be taken back by military force by-and-bye. Anyway, let us have SOMETHING, and have done with the question.' Is not that really what such an article comes to? And the worst of it is that I fear that, between ignorance and recklessness, such a feeling as the article represents is really our greatest danger. And then the plausible fallacy that every one wants Home Rule of some sort for Ireland, and what sort does not matter, and that those who are pleased to see an interchange of courtesies between the Lord Mayors of Dublin and of London, are in the same boat with those who want to have an independent Ireland!"

To his Mother, on the Occasion of the Second Home Rule Bill.

"THE HOUSE OF COMMONS,
13th February 1893.

"DEAREST MOTHER—Here I am waiting in the House for the beginning of the proceedings, and the revealing of this long withheld secret.

". . . It is an immense relief to me to have got over the ordeal of my first speech here, and to have got through it, on the whole, well. People have certainly been most kind to me. I had congratulations from very many quarters, which have given me great pleasure. Balfour told me that I had made a first-class speech, and Chamberlain, James, Lord George Hamilton, and many others, spoke most warmly. Among my opponents Sir C. Russell, Byles, Dalzell, and Sir Charles Dilke paid me most kind compliments. I admit that I was very nervous before, but didn't feel at all so while I was on my legs.

"I am sitting up in the Gallery nearly opposite the Treasury Bench, so hope I shall be able to hear Gladstone well. In an hour I shall know the whole plot, and you will have heard it by the time this reaches you.

"By the way, I must not forget to tell you that several Radical members told me they entirely agreed with my speech, but, of course, could not vote for it, as being a vote of censure. C., to whom I have not spoken since he deserted to the enemy, told me that he was so much struck by the facts I had given, that he did not intend to vote. He did, as a matter of fact, go home, and did not vote. Sir Charles Dilke also told me that he had walked out, and not voted.

". . . Gladstone has just come in amidst loud cheers. Now comes one of those odd intervals to which the House is accustomed, occupied by giving notices of bills which will never be brought in, and resolutions which will never be moved.

"*Later.*—Gladstone has just done. An eloquent peroration, but the whole speech as if the Government were 'riding for a fall.' At least so it appears to me on the first view. I don't think they mean to pass it, or expect to."

It may hardly be remembered nowadays that in 1892 the national flag was not flown over the Houses of Parliament. The Union Jack, which now floats over the Victoria Tower when Parliament is sitting, and which is so familiar a sight to-day, was not there then, and the pole on the summit of the tower was flagless, except on occasions when the Queen was present, when the Royal Standard was displayed.

One of Oakeley's first "questions" in the House was to ask the Government whether, following the example of other nations, the national flag should not be flown over the national parliament. The official reply given by the First Commissioner of Works was to the effect that Westminster being a royal palace, the Royal Standard alone could be flown there, and that only when the Sovereign was present, but in 1893 Mr. Shaw Lefevre gave a different reply. There was, it seemed, no statutory objection which prevented the flag being displayed on the Victoria Tower, but it would entail a cost which the Government was not prepared to face, and a further question elicited the fact that the estimated cost amounted to an annual sum of twenty-four pounds. This sum was not on the estimates, and the

Government was not willing to incur the expense. The laughter and the wrath that met this announcement reached us, echoed in letters from distant parts of the Empire, and from men whom Oakeley had never seen, who wrote offering to subscribe the twenty-four pounds at once, and begging him to transmit their offers to the Government. This, of course, he refused to do. If the nation could not afford to put up its own flag, no private individual had the right to do so; but at intervals for two years he continued to ask the same question in the House. It was to Mr. Herbert Gladstone that the honour of having put up the flag at last was due. When he went to the Office of Works, Oakeley approached him on the matter, and was invited to put the question again in the House; a favourable answer was given, and the flag has floated there ever since when Parliament is sitting. I was touched by the words of a working-man, who, looking up very soon after Oakeley's death, from the windows of our house in Westminster, to the great Tower just above us, said to me, "You must like sometimes to think that he got that flag flown there; I always remember him when I see it."

An accident, which might have had a tragic ending, happened to us in the winter of 1892, a few months after Oakeley entered Parliament. We had gone to Virginia Water one December day to skate with our cousin Edward Arnold and his wife.¹ "Whilst we were skating near the shore we suddenly saw that the ice had broken nearer the middle of the lake, and that some one had fallen in. We soon realised that it was Ted who was in the water. Oakeley skated out towards the place, and saw him clinging to the edge of the ice about 30 yards away from the strong part. Some people were gathered there, but no very practical steps were being taken to get him out. Taking up one end of a ladder which lay near Oakeley skated forward with the ladder in front of him, hoping to get near enough to be able to slide it along to Ted, but when he got a little way the ice cracked so badly that it was clear it would not bear him any further; so lying flat down on his face, in order to distribute his weight, he crawled on

¹ This account is taken from a letter of mine written at the time.

as far as he could, pushing the ladder before him. Minnie and I watching, saw the ice give way, and saw Oakeley go under. . . . The men who were standing there tried to throw him a rope, but it was too short, and did not reach him, and the ice broke away every time he tried to draw himself out. . . . By breaking the ice with his hands, he made a sort of passage or channel, and worked his way along till he got near enough to the rope to be able to get hold of it. At last he drew himself up flat on to the surface, and then was hauled along to the strong ice which would bear, where he got on to his feet again. . . . It was a horrible time of waiting and watching. All this time Ted was still in the water, a long way further out, and his position seemed to be getting more and more desperate, for he had been in the freezing water nearly twenty minutes.

"Another man had been trying to throw a rope to him, but it was too short. We had sent for a longer rope, and when this came, Oakeley knotted one cord round his waist, and started again to creep out as far as possible towards Ted, hoping to get near enough to him and throw him the longer rope. But the ice would not bear him, and the men round us cried out that it was sheer madness, that it was throwing away his life, and that he should not be allowed to go any farther; only a boy of very light weight, properly roped to the bystanders, could possibly go out safely. Oakeley offered a reward of ten pounds, and a little lad of about twelve years old, whose name was Richard Jefferies,¹ volunteered, and, as you know, succeeded. I hope it was not a great risk—I really believe it was not—but it was a brave thing to do, and the only chance that was left. We could not bear to look when he threw the rope, for the fear was so terrible that Ted would be too much exhausted to be able to pull himself out; but he managed to do it somehow; and then we started to get them both up to the little inn near by, where we had sent to beg the people to get blankets, hot water, and fires ready. Oakeley was in his shirt sleeves, his clothes literally frozen on to him."

¹ The medal and testimonials of the Royal Humane Society were given to R. Jefferies and to Oakeley.

CHAPTER VI

"The misfortune and vice of our country is to think ourselves better than other men, which I take to be the reason that we generally send too small a force to execute our designs. Let us see to it that we do not now underrate our possible enemies, and that we do not maintain afloat too small a force to insure us against the evil that threatens."

From a letter of Sir Cloudesley Shovel, 1702.

Parliamentary life and work—Naval questions in Parliament—The condition of the Training Ships—The Chartered Company and other South African questions in Parliament.

THERE is a real difficulty in telling the story of the active years of a man's work and life in Parliament without making it a record tedious to read, by dwelling too much on efforts and achievements which pass away soon from our memory, as all political things do ; or without, on the other hand, passing too lightly and superficially over work and objects that he cared for greatly, and for which he felt it was worth while to give up the best years of his life. Some few men in each generation realise with great distinctness the reform or the policy which is for them the thing of all others best worth aiming at and striving for. Such a clear realisation gives concentration and intensity to their efforts, and to the presentment of their case.

If their efforts are crowned with success ; and the policy they have advocated is at last adopted, and becomes part of the national policy, they must be counted fortunate in their work, for their great object has been gained, and they have helped to make the cause succeed on which their hearts were set. The way in which their particular battles were won will soon be forgotten and cease to have interest. But the policy remains, and on the broad lines of it, by its soundness and its advantage to the state the man's political record will be judged. The spirit in which he did his work, the

sincerity that directed it, the point of view from which he looked at great national questions, and viewed them in relation to one another, these may have a lasting interest long after the details of his efforts, his successes, or his failures are forgotten.

In the case of Oakeley's political life a comparatively simple and direct story has to be told, and one in which party politics have no large place, because apart from the subject of the Union, he hardly ever spoke in the House of Commons, excepting on the Naval and Military questions to which he gave so great a part of his life.

There were also a few occasions when he put forward some aspect of Imperial Federation, or spoke on some of the problems of our South African colonies and dependencies.

The story could not be told at all without describing the outlines of the work that he did for the Navy and for the Army during the years of his life in Parliament. But it can be told chiefly in his own words, for, as I have said, writing was to him the easiest and most natural method of expressing himself, and he wrote regularly and fully on the subjects on which he spoke in the House, and with which his mind was occupied. It can be told also in broad and simple outline, without touching on personalities, or paying overmuch attention to details whose interest has passed away. It would be very badly and imperfectly told if it did not show something of the spirit of sincerity and of devotion to a high ideal which guided his whole political life. Even those who were his opponents, and who objected to the vehemence with which he expressed his beliefs, saw in him a "brave fighter" whose courage no pain or suffering could quench, whose sincerity was never questioned. A devotion to great ideals so disinterested and single-hearted, a courage and hopefulness that could not be conquered even by mortal illness, are not qualities so common as to pass wholly unnoticed and unremembered by a man's generation. The remembrance of these and of other qualities that those who knew him best recognised and loved, are summed up in these words written by Mr. George Wyndham :—

"During the last few years I perhaps had a closer opportunity than others for realising his courage and patriotism and unselfishness. I do not think that any other 'fighter' of our time combined so much conviction for his cause with such deep personal modesty. His great courage and wonderful unselfishness appealed to me, and if you will allow me to say so, made me love him."

Oakeley entered Parliament at a stormy and critical time in its history, when the whole attention of the House of Commons was necessarily given up for two sessions to the consideration of Mr. Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill. The long fight over the Bill was carried on by the small Gladstonian majority, and by the keen and excited Unionist minority, compact and ably led, that had been returned to Parliament to oppose and to expose the Bill. The feelings of men on both sides of the House ran high, and the stringent use of the closure, as it was applied to clause after clause, and to the speeches even of the Unionist leaders, produced a feeling of bitterness and exasperation such as had been previously almost unknown in English politics, and which was slow to pass away. In his frequent letters to his mother, written during these debates, he tells her of the condition of strain and excitement of the House of Commons, and of the "moral violence of this shameless closing," by means of which the great constitutional changes proposed by the Bill were to be forced without discussion through the House. "The House is in a turmoil of excitement and confusion," he writes in an interval between divisions in July 1893. "As indeed it well may be. Three clauses and a half creating a new Legislature and a new Executive passed without explanation or discussion; Balfour closed in the middle of his speech. There have been howling and cheering, interjections, shouts, everything to make one hotter on this hot night. We got them down to 15 on clause 6. Some honest Radicals (eight of them) voting against the property qualification and four walking out. The last division has taken up their numbers from 35 to 36, Villiers having gone home. There is, despite all the real excitement, a shade of unreality in the whole performance, arising from the knowledge in every

one's mind that this Bill, whatever happens ultimately, will not become law."

In these debates his intimate knowledge of the *personnel* and past history of the Irish Nationalist organisations stood him in good stead, and was often called into requisition, and was freely acknowledged by the Unionist leaders.

On the other Irish questions which took up so much of the time of this Parliament he spoke but seldom, but the facts which he had taken so much trouble to acquire, and which he knew with so much accuracy of detail, were always at the service of the leaders of the Unionist party, and have been freely and cordially acknowledged by them. Amongst the political friends to whom he was at this time especially drawn by reason of their defence of Unionist principles were Colonel Saunderson, at once the keenest of fighters, and one of the best loved men in the House, Mr. Atkinson, now Lord Atkinson, William Ellison Macartney and Sir Edward Carson, whose maiden speech in support of Oakeley's candidature at Dewsbury will never be forgotten by the Yorkshire audience that heard him.

The "Home Rule" session lasted through the autumn of 1893, and the Bill was rejected by the House of Lords in the month of November.

"You will have seen the accounts of the Ulster Assembly," Oakeley wrote to his sister of one of the great meetings of protest held in Belfast in November. "It was a wonderful success, all the more wonderful to those who know, as I do, the materials for difference, and even for very sharp difference, which were brought together by the Assembly. The success of the meeting was due entirely to the self-restraint and mutual forbearance of many men of many views. The election of the Ulster Council was also a notable achievement. An attempt was made to 'caucus' the election, but the bulk of the Orangemen had far too much good sense to make such a mistake. They voted for the best men, and nothing could have been better or more sensible. It was pleasing to me to contrast the stately and inspiring proceedings in Belfast, with the bear-fight which was going on on the same day at the Federation meeting in Dublin." This letter goes on to speak of the subject which now occupied

most of Oakeley's time and thought, namely, the condition of the Navy, a question the gravity and importance of which he felt at that time could not be overestimated.

"I am glad to say the House does not seem likely to give me much to do this session; the only chance of my having to do anything before Christmas is if a debate can be raised on the condition of the Navy. I cannot exaggerate the gravity of the present situation, nor the danger to which the country is exposed. The letters I get and the facts I know are really terrifying.

"Sanguine speeches like those recently made by Lord Spencer and Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth do infinite harm; they are incorrect and utterly misleading. On Tuesday I am going down to dine and sleep at Chatham to see Beresford. On Wednesday we have a special meeting of the Chamber of Commerce to discuss the condition of the Navy, and the steps to be taken. In one way or another I hope to be able to make people sit up. But I do assure you that grave as is the danger which in my opinion threatens the country from this Home Rule business, it is far less than that which may be upon us any day, owing to our neglect of ordinary elementary precautions to preserve our control of the sea."

Improvements in the condition of the Navy, and its state of preparedness for war, had been made in the years that had elapsed since 1884, administrative reforms had been carried out, our fleets had been reinforced, and the *personnel* of the Navy had been added to.

Under the Naval Defence Act of 1889 the financial position of the Navy had improved, but this Act, valuable as it was, was inadequate, because it failed sufficiently to take into account the fact that whilst we were building ships, other European Powers were building in the hope of outstripping us. Real as was the advance that we had made, the efforts of France and Russia, who were anxious to outdistance us in shipbuilding, were gradually enabling their dockyards to reduce the English superiority in ships and equipment. The preparations of the French Admiralty were being pushed forward with great energy, and Russia was closely following in the steps of France.

That the British Navy was not so strong as it should have been; that our position in the Mediterranean was gravely imperilled, and that we required more officers and men, as well as more ships, were conclusions that were forced upon all students of naval questions in 1893. Once more the public and the House of Commons awakened to the fact that our maritime supremacy was gravely threatened, and that the Navy in its condition at that time would be insufficient to fulfil all the duties which it would be called upon to perform in the event of war. It seems almost as though it were a necessary, although a most unfortunate and extravagant feature of our system of administration, that at intervals of time, generally about every five or six years, the Government of the day should have to be recalled to a sense of its duties with regard to the Navy, and that the country should be confronted with the necessity of doing in haste what it had omitted to do at leisure.

By means of articles, speeches, and letters throughout the years 1892-1893, Oakeley and others who thought with him endeavoured to enforce their belief that, in the essentials of ships, men, and guns, we were losing our position of superiority. Lord Charles Beresford, writing in June 1893 and in the November of the same year, also preached this lesson vigorously, and set forth a programme which he looked upon as the minimum that would be required to place us on an equality with our rivals.

Including vessels built, building and proposed, the British Navy was, as compared to the combined navies of France and Russia, at a disadvantage, to the extent of 9 first-class battleships, 3 second-class battleships, 1 third-class battleship, 8 armoured cruisers, and 9 coast defence ships.

The standard that was considered necessary, and that was demanded by the reformers of the day was an ironclad fleet equal to the combined fleets of any two powers which might be arrayed against us; whilst for our cruiser fleet a higher standard was demanded, "seeing that we get our food by way of the sea, and that alone among the great nations of the world we are dependent upon trade routes for our daily bread and meat."¹

¹ H. O. A.-F. in an article in the *Daily Graphic*.

"My hope is that, say four years hence, we may have in ironclads, ship for ship, the vessels which France and Russia will then have ready. A steadily pursued policy, begun at once, of laying down ironclad for ironclad, and two cruisers for one, will keep us always in our proper position, and save us from the necessity of future agitations and scares."

The weakness of our Mediterranean Fleet especially was criticised by naval officers and other writers on the subject. So long as our policy demands that we should remain in the Mediterranean, it is clearly necessary that our fleet there should be one of sufficient strength to be ready for any emergency. That it was a dangerously weak fleet in 1893 was only too well known; and its weakness was rendered so grave by the unprotected condition of the Gibraltar dockyard, that the state of Gibraltar seemed to Oakeley and to many others to be among the most pressing and urgent of naval questions.

"It is not a question," he wrote, "which requires technical knowledge or a profound acquaintance with naval strategy for its comprehension. On the contrary, the real point at issue is one which any man of common sense can understand. Either Gibraltar is a naval base or it is nothing. If it be incapable of furnishing a refuge and a repairing station in time of war, it is not only useless but a most dangerous possession, for it fosters illusions which the first day of war must shatter to pieces. It is absolutely certain that it does not and cannot fulfil the primary duties of a naval base. There is a dockyard, but there is no dock; there is an anchorage, but the anchorage is totally unprotected. To attempt to carry on warlike operations at sea, a thousand miles from a repairing base, is a folly—a folly which in this case may easily lead to the destruction of our whole Mediterranean fleet, and our downfall as a naval power. It may be good policy to hold the Mediterranean, it may be good policy to withdraw from the Mediterranean altogether, but to attempt to hold the Mediterranean without providing the means of protecting and repairing injured ships at Gibraltar is not a policy at all. It is a mere act of recklessness, the outcome neither of reason nor policy."

Of our guns and torpedo equipment he pointed out that 53 per cent of our ironclads were armed with guns of a model that had been abandoned by the other great Powers twenty years previously, nearly a hundred of our vessels being still armed with muzzle-loading guns of a bygone

generation. He showed also that the French torpedo flotilla, which was kept always in readiness for service, with a special crew attached to each vessel, was far superior in organisation to our own torpedo service ; and he vigorously supported Lord Charles Beresford's demand that faster torpedo-boat destroyers and faster torpedo boats should be among the additions to be made to our Navy. The question of *personnel* was an equally important and pressing one, and that a large increase in the numbers, both of officers and men, was necessary, was a point on which all the naval experts and writers of the day were agreed. Concerning this shortage Oakeley wrote :—

“Although we are happily in a state of profound peace, and although only a comparatively small portion of this fleet is in commission, nearly 90 per cent of all the executive and engineer officers who are at the disposal of the Admiralty are in actual employment, and if every reserve officer were available we should still lack 208 executives and 180 engineers, nor have we any provision for filling up vacancies caused by sickness or death. I say, therefore, without hesitation, that the needs of the situation demand that the active list shall as soon as possible be increased, until there are 200 captains, 320 commanders and staff commanders, 1500 lieutenants, and 380 sub-lieutenants. This would bring up the total strength of these ranks from 1508 to 2400.

Lest any one should hastily cry out against the suggestion, I may say that the total strength of the corresponding ranks of the active lists (1892) of the French and Russian navies is 2690.

Similarly the engineers' branch should be increased until there are 200 fleet and staff engineers, 400 chief engineers and engineers, and 500 assistant engineers, or 1100 in all ; instead of 726 as at present. Makeshifts, save under the weightiest pressure of circumstances, ought never to be employed instead of them. Yet to commission all our vessels, which are not at present flying the pennant, we have in reserve, including even those who may be sick or otherwise temporarily unavailable, only 10.6 per cent of our whole force. . . .

In lieu of the 70,493 naval officers, seamen and royal marines who are at present nominally available for service afloat, we need a total of 90,000. France and Russia together have a total of 84,000 ; exclusive of their enormous reserves, and of their marine infantry and artillery. And in proportion as the officers of executive rank are increased, so should the numbers of the warrant officers be added to, for the warrant officers are the salt of the navy. With fewer than 90,000 officers and men, we shall not, say in 1895, be able to employ the full force of such fleets as we shall then possess ; and if we have ships without skilled and adequate crews, we shall only in the next war provide our enemies with vessels to be used against us.”

When Parliament reassembled in February 1894 the experiences of naval reformers in 1884 were repeated. Their contentions were in each case strenuously denied by the official spokesmen of the Government; but in each case the efforts of those who desired an increase in the strength of the Navy were successful, and their demands were followed by programmes of new construction and reform. In each case the House of Commons and the country were assured that the agitation that preceded them had had no influence upon the production of the Government programmes.

The naval estimates of 1894 in many important particulars, were considered by the reform party fairly to meet the claims which they had urged, and to set out a scheme of additions to the Navy which would be of the greatest service if carried out. On one of the most important points, however, the programme of the Government gave them no satisfaction. Out of a sum of £771,000 to be expended on the construction of the dockyard and mole at Gibraltar, the sum of £1000 only was put down on the estimates as the amount to be expended in the year 1894. It was difficult to understand, as Oakeley pointed out in the House of Commons, why, unless it were for the purposes of an advertisement, this vote should have been brought into the estimates at all in this form.

Until the Gibraltar question was fairly and honestly faced he contended that the safety of our Mediterranean fleet and our supremacy at sea were gravely imperilled.

To his Mother.

“BELFAST, 9th November 1893.

“. . . I have had little to do in the House of late, but outside I have been far from idle. In the first place, I have been busy with my book. Then I have been working hard about the Navy—seeing people, arranging matters with the *Times*, and completing my facts.

“Yesterday we succeeded in getting the Chamber of Commerce to take the matter up, and we have appointed a committee which I hope will prove both strong and active. I have had long talks about the present state of things with

Balfour, Lord George Hamilton, and many others. Balfour is admirable about it. He says I need never mind coming to him about the condition of the Navy ; there is no subject nearer his heart, and he will help us in any way that he possibly can. From many men I should not value such assurances a pinch of snuff, but I do value them very much, coming from Balfour."

Shortly after he entered the House of Commons Oakeley was invited by the members of the Service Committee in the House to join their number. This was an acknowledgment of his work on naval and military questions which gave him great pleasure. I believe that, at that time, Sir Charles Dilke was the only other civilian member, unconnected with either of the services, who belonged to the Committee. Oakeley served on it as long as he was an unofficial member of the House, only leaving it when he became Secretary to the Admiralty. In conjunction with Sir Charles Dilke, Sir John Colomb, and others who held similar views of Imperial defence, useful work was done in connection with the Army and Navy Estimates in the House, and valuable discussions were held in which the broad principles underlying all questions of Imperial defence were gradually formulated. In Oakeley's subsequent work on these subjects he remained in close touch with these friends ; they worked together as far as possible, and he owed much to their help and counsel.

In the autumn of 1893 when Oakeley was advocating a large increase of *personnel* in the Navy, he became aware that the deficiency of accommodation in our training ships was so grave that room could not be found on them for the full complement of boys allowed by the Navy Estimates. Some of these ships were indeed crammed to overflowing, and the overcrowded state of the Devonport training ships was causing the greatest anxiety to those who realised their condition. Oakeley went down himself to Plymouth, visited the ships, and made a most thorough investigation of the *Impregnable*. In the autumn session of Parliament he put a series of questions to the Secretary to the Admiralty as to their condition, and as to the sickness and mortality on board. The reply given by Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth

was that : " No reports have been received by the Admiralty from the medical officers as to cases of sickness or death attributable to overcrowding." ¹

Statistics as to the illness and mortality on board the ships for the year 1893 were pressed for in Parliament but were not given ; although the facts asked for could have been obtained by any representative of the Admiralty within half an hour of setting foot on board the ships. The official figures which were forthcoming for the year 1892 showed, however, that in that year alone 30 boys had died on board the *Impregnable*, whilst 150 were invalided out of the service. The figures for 1893 were not to be had, but it came to our knowledge that no less than 8 boys died on board the *Impregnable* and *Lion* in the first three weeks of February 1894. " The boys here are dying like flies " wrote one who knew all the circumstances and who was on the spot, " For God's sake do all you can, and do it quickly." The overcrowding was indeed so serious that but for the fact that 220 boys were laid up in hospital, the ships could not have accommodated the full number of boys voted by Parliament. In a letter to the Plymouth papers in January 1893 Oakeley wrote—

" The boys in the *Impregnable* and *Lion* are the pick of the class from which they come ; they are avowedly selected on account of their good physique and sound constitution ; they live in one of the healthiest parts of England ; they are well-fed, and are or ought to be safeguarded by every precaution known to sanitary and medical science. And yet what do we find with regard to these two ships in 1892 ? The Secretary to the Admiralty intimated that during that year the health of the two ships left something to be desired ; I rather think it did.

" The following table shows the death-rate in the *Impregnable* and *Lion* as compared with other death-rates.

¹ If this answer meant that a particular form of document, written on a particular sized paper and known to an Admiralty clerk as a " report," had not been received, the answer may have been technically correct. But if the answer meant that verbal or written communications had not reached the Admiralty expressing the opinion of the medical officers that the grave overcrowding of the ships was resulting in sickness and death, the answer was not only misleading but quite untrue.

The second table makes a similar comparison in the matter of invaliding.

1. *Death-rate* per 1000 on home station (between 15 and 25 years), 4.63; do., on board H.M.S. *Britannia*, 4.8.

On board the four other training ships, viz. *Boscawen*, *Caledonia*, *Ganges*, and *Vincent*, 5.22; general death-rate of navy, 5.58; death-rate on West African station (including Gold Coast), 8.1; *Impregnable* and *Lion*, 12.26, showing an excess in the death-rate of the *Impregnable* and *Lion* of 51 per cent over the West African station,¹ 121 per cent over the general rate of the navy, 134 per cent over the other four training ships, 157 over the *Britannia*, and 166 per cent over the home station (between 15 and 25).

2. *Invaliding rate* per 1000—H.M.S. *Britannia*, 6.6; home station, 21.63; average for the navy, 26.21; four other training ships, 26.49; West African station, 40.54; *Impregnable* and *Lion*, 55.76; showing an excess in the invaliding rate of the *Impregnable* and *Lion* of 37 per cent over the West African station, 110 per cent over the four other training ships, 112 over the average for the navy, 157 per cent over the home station, and 744 per cent over the *Britannia*.

"I think you will admit that in face of these astounding figures I had some reason to ask for information with regard to these two ships. I am sorry that the particulars with regard to 1892 should only come into my hands in the beginning of 1894. I suppose I shall not have accurate figures respecting 1893 until January 1895. Meanwhile, however, I have seen enough with my own eyes to make me certain that the two training ships are not adequate for the work they have to do."

He wrote also on the same subject in the *National Review* in May 1894—"The *Impregnable* was shamefully overcrowded. The boys' schoolroom, which is simply the after cabin of the ship, would be condemned by any school inspector and closed within twenty-four hours. It holds no fewer than 460 boys, who sit jammed together in serried rows. The result of the overcrowding was deadly sickness among them. To say that the overcrowding was killing the boys is not an overstatement. Many died of a combination of pneumonia and meningitis, a combination which medical men tell me is the direct result of the overcrowding

¹ A champion of the official view who took up the cudgels on behalf of the Admiralty in the *British Medical Journal* made the odd blunder of pointing out that in the particular years taken for comparison, the West African station, bad as its usual record is, had been abnormally unhealthy and dangerous.

of human beings. There is no proper recreation ground for the ship, hence it has been necessary to cover the deck with a heavy awning to allow exercises upon the upper deck in bad weather. In winter, when the awning is stretched and the lower ports closed, as they have to be, the air becomes foul and unwholesome, the ship 'sweats,' and the health of the boys suffers."

The grave condition thus revealed had made a deep impression on Oakeley's mind. The letter written to the Plymouth papers appeared on 18th January 1894. Five days later orders were sent down to fit temporary hammocks and racks on board the *Calcutta*, a hulk attached to the *Cambridge*, and 300 boys were subsequently removed to that vessel. On the 12th February another 300 boys were drafted into the *Black Prince*, which was hurriedly called into requisition.

The official answers given in the House were to the unofficial mind so wholly misleading that questions had to be repeatedly and urgently pushed home before the true facts of the case could be elicited.

If this subject has been dwelt upon with some insistence and at some length, it is because it was one on which Oakeley felt deeply, and because his steady persistence in bringing the facts before the public was eventually successful in getting the graver evils removed. A deep and strong feeling was aroused in the House of Commons and the country. The radical changes which had to be made in the arrangements on board the training-ships, were proof, if proof were needed, that reforms were urgently required.

The year 1895 saw the dissolution of Parliament and a General Election. There had been many rumours of a Nationalist candidate to stand for the seat in West Belfast. At the last moment Oakeley was unopposed, but the probability of opposition had the result of rallying all his friends together, and of doubling their zeal and energy. It would be invidious, where so many helped us so greatly, to single out the names of a few, but the kindness we received was never to be forgotten, so warm-hearted and so ungrudging was it, and the committees of men and of women alike did splendid and loyal service.

The Liberal majority in the House of Commons was swept away in this election, and Lord Salisbury's Government came back into power.

Under Mr. Goschen's administration of the Admiralty much was now accomplished for the Navy that Oakeley had pressed for in past years, and he gladly found himself able to support and not to criticise the policy of a Board with which he was so much in sympathy.

Oakeley's father had taken so constant an interest in South African affairs, and especially in all that concerned the native races of South Africa, that it was natural that his son should inherit and continue much of that interest. Mr. Forster's intimate knowledge, and his strong and balanced judgment, made him a very wise and helpful counsellor to those who wished to ensure that, in its dealings with the native races, the Imperial Government should act justly and generously, and should faithfully observe its obligations towards them.

In South Africa during the last quarter of the nineteenth century there were a number of very difficult questions awaiting solution, all of which called for a definite and consistent line of policy on the part of the Imperial Government. They were problems that both by inheritance and conviction were full of interest to Oakeley; and many of his articles, written for Mr. Henley, for the *Nineteenth Century*, and for the *Times*, were written on the questions of Delagoa Bay, of Swaziland, Basutoland, and Bechuanaland, and later on the subject of the Chartered Company. He spoke in the House, and gave so much work for many years to these South African questions that they cannot be passed over without notice, although to give any full and detailed account of each of them would involve a history far too long and too complicated to be in place here; whilst any such account would of necessity fall far short of what would be required by a student of South African problems and history. I shall, therefore, only refer briefly to one or two points which he believed to be of special moment, on which he laid stress in writing and speaking, and which seem also to have a general and permanent importance, outlasting the time at which he wrote of them.

Our relations to the chiefs and people of Bechuanaland, the Constitutional question that was involved in the status and position of our Imperial representative in South Africa, and the general problem of the delegation of powers of government to chartered companies, may be taken as typical questions of this kind.

A grave crisis in the history of the Bechuana people in 1888, brought before the attention of this country and of Parliament the question of the responsibility of the Imperial Government towards them.

British Bechuanaland, a great and fertile province, whose tribes were friendly to this country, had been repeatedly raided and despoiled by marauding parties of Boers from the adjacent Transvaal. A party in Cape Colony, in order to secure peace and tranquillity, had been quite willing to hand over the Bechuanas to the government of President Kruger. The Bechuana chiefs, however, appealed to Great Britain for protection and help, and, after many delays on the part of the Home Government, Sir Charles Warren's expedition was sent out in 1884, and at a great cost restored order to the country, which was henceforward administered as a Crown Colony and ruled by the Imperial authorities. It was the earnest desire of the native population, and of their chief Montsioia, that this rule should be maintained, and their rights and their country safeguarded by Great Britain.

In the year 1888 the cession of British Bechuanaland to Cape Colony began, notwithstanding the protests of Montsioia and the declared policy of the Imperial Government, to be advocated by a large party at the Cape, who desired to annex these territories, which were becoming prosperous and valuable. Pressure was brought to bear on the Colonial Office to induce the Home Government to accede to the desire of Cape Colony, and to surrender the rights which it exercised as trustee for the people of the United Kingdom, at whose expense the territory had been reduced to order, and had been administered through years of difficulty and danger.

Against this demand of Cape Colony it was pointed out that British Bechuanaland was a possession of value to

the Empire ; and that by holding it we should keep open, and in our own hands, an important highway to the interior, clear of the Transvaal.

But apart from these considerations of policy and interest, Oakeley urged that the ill-success of Cape Colony in its relations with native races and in its administration of their territories, would make it a betrayal of trust were we to hand over the Bechuanas, against their will, to a Government which had in the past mismanaged the Basuto and their lands ; and which had forced the sale of drink on the people of Kaffraria contrary to their expressed protests, and to the infinite harm of their country.

A speech made in the year 1888 by Sir Hercules Robinson, who was High Commissioner of South Africa and Governor of Cape Colony, recommending the cession of Bechuanaland, revealed very clearly the invidious position in which the High Commissioner was placed ; and gave force to the argument which Oakeley had long been urging, that the double nature of this office might easily make it an exceedingly difficult and questionable one. He pointed out that as High Commissioner, Sir Hercules Robinson was responsible to the Imperial Government for the welfare of all our South African territories. As Governor of Cape Colony he was bound to consider the special interests of Cape Colony, and to act in accordance with the advice of the Cape Ministers, who were representatives of the majority for the time being in the Colony. It was natural to suppose, and it was the fact, that the interests of the Imperial Government, and of the large native and English populations committed to his charge, did not on all occasions correspond with the interests of the majority in Cape Colony. When these interests conflicted, as they did in such a question as the proposed cession of Bechuanaland, the High Commissioner was obliged to elect whether to do his duty as High Commissioner responsible to the Imperial Government, or as Governor of Cape Colony responsible to Cape Ministers.

That the High Commissionership should be separated from the governorship of Cape Colony, and that an Imperial officer should be appointed, charged with the duty

of administering the extra-Colonial territories in the interests of their inhabitants, were the constitutional reforms that Oakeley pressed for. The protests that were made in this country—to which added weight was given by a speech of Lord Goschen's—and the protests of the Bechuana people, were listened to by the Home Government, in so far that the administration of British Bechuanaland remained unchanged; but the anomaly of the double office was not brought to an end; and when Mr. Rhodes held the High Commissionership he combined with it the office of Cape Premier as well.

The following letter, written in 1891, sums up forcibly the situation as Oakeley saw it at that date:—

“Consider what are the offices which Mr. Rhodes fills, and what are the responsibilities attached to them. In the first place, Mr. Rhodes is Premier of the Cape Colony, and as such advises the Governor of the Cape, who, as a constitutional Governor, is bound to follow the counsels of his Minister in all matters within the Colony. But the Governor of the Cape is Her Majesty's High Commissioner in South Africa. It will be said that the High Commissioner, although he is bound to follow the advice of his Premier *quâ* Governor, can snap his fingers at him *quâ* High Commissioner. Unluckily this is not so. By an incredible piece of blundering, the Colonial Office has made the High Commissioner the servant of the Cape Minister. An addition of £2000 was recently made to the salary of the Governor on account of his services as Imperial High Commissioner. The Colonial Office has positively allowed the Cape Parliament to undertake the payment of this sum. It is an old saying that ‘who pays the piper calls the tune.’ If the High Commissioner does not happen to please the Premier of the Cape Colony, the Premier can stop the High Commissioner's salary. That is the plain English of the situation. But this is only the beginning of the complication. Mr. Rhodes is not only Premier of the Cape Colony and paymaster of the High Commissioner, but he is also manager of the largest mining concern in South Africa—a land of mines, in which the mining law is still in a state of transition. At this moment, I believe, the mining laws which may make or mar the fortunes of every man who has an investment, or who holds land in South Africa, are under review at Cape Town, and the head of the Administration which will decide the ultimate form of these laws is the manager of the De Beers Mine and the moving spirit of half a dozen similar enterprises. But this is not all. Outside the Cape Colony lies the great territory of Bechuanaland. Over this immense tract, nominally under the control of the Imperial Government, the High Commissioner is practically an autocratic Governor. The High Commissioner governs the Crown Colony, and we have already seen who governs the High Commissioner.

Once more we go northward, and we come to the great area which has been handed over to the tender mercies of the Chartered Company. But who and what is the Chartered Company? The Chartered Company is Mr. Rhodes, its general manager, manager of the De Beers Mine, Premier of the Cape Colony, and adviser to the High Commissioner. And when we ask, 'What is the Chartered Company?' the answer is that it is a company organised for the purpose of making money, and to which we have handed over just enough of our sovereign rights to leave us entire responsibility for its actions, without the slightest effective control over its policy. It may be urged that in the Chartered Company Mr. Rhodes is only one among a number of colleagues of equal power and importance. I have a great respect for some of the directors of the Chartered Company, but I confess I have no information which leads me to believe that they are qualified, if occasion should arise, to take a line of their own, if that line does not happen to be the one which is adopted by the Premier of the Cape Colony.

It will be said that the combination of these various offices and responsibilities in the hands of one man is accidental, that Mr. Rhodes is beyond reproach, and that he is able to discharge his many duties without allowing public and personal interests to come into conflict. Very likely in the present instance such a reply would be justifiable, but I maintain that it is not fair to subject any man to the trial which such a false position must in the nature of things impose upon him. It is desirable that in matters connected with the administration of the Empire there should not only be no grounds for suspicion, but that there should be no room for it. It is possible that if the late High Commissioner had been quite independent of the Cape Colony and of Cape interests, he would still have expressed his approval of the terms of the Rudd concession. But unquestionably the commendation would have had more weight if it had not come from an official who spoke under direct inspiration of Cape politicians, and who had a deep interest in the commercial undertaking with which Mr. Rudd's name was closely associated.

Again, it may be ideally right that the policy of the Imperial Government should be stultified by the concessions of the enormous land grants on either side of the projected Bechuanaland Railway. It may be right that the control of the Crown Colony should thus by a side-wind be transferred to the Cape Colony and the Chartered Company. But the wisdom of the policy would, I think, be more universally recognised if the Premier of the Cape Colony at one end and the manager of the Chartered Company at the other did not happen to be the same person.

With regard to Mr. Rhodes himself, it will be said that to object to a Minister having a pecuniary interest in the country which he serves is an absurd piece of purism, and that we should never think of applying such a self-denying ordinance in this country. I admit the fact; but England is not Mashonaland. No one could object to Lord Salisbury or Mr. Gladstone when in office plunging up to the neck in railway or land speculations in the United Kingdom. They would

have no more power over the conditions which affected their enterprises than any other shareholder. But if Sir John Lawrence, at the time when all the Punjab lay at his feet, had headed a great North of India Land Company, in which he held 10,000 shares, and out of which he drew many thousands of pounds of profit, his conduct would have been criticised, and a precedent—not, I think, without value at the present time—would have been established.

I bear Mr. Rhodes no ill-will ; nor do I suppose that at this stage it is possible to go back upon the past. But I do hold most distinctly that the position which Mr. Rhodes occupies is a most unfortunate one for himself, for South Africa, and for this country. He may say and do everything that is right and wise. I am sure I hope he will. But I want Englishmen to understand that when the Premier of the Cape Colony speaks, the manager of the De Beers Mine, and of the Chartered Company speaks also ; and that when the High Commissioner, the autocratic ruler of more than half of British South Africa, performs an administrative act, he performs it by and with the advice of the Premier of the Cape Colony, the manager of the De Beers Mine, and the manager of the Chartered Company.”

On no constitutional question did Oakeley feel more strongly than on the institution of Chartered Companies as a method of carrying on the government of any part of the Empire. The attacks that he made were made, not on individuals, nor on any Chartered Company in its character as a trading concern, but on a Chartered Company in its character of delegate of the authority of the state. Long before the “Raid” brought shame and disaster on the South African Chartered Company, he had written and spoken strongly about other actions of the Company which he thought reflected discredit upon it and upon England ; particularly its action with regard to mining rights in Lobengula’s country, and its transactions with President Kruger with regard to Swaziland.

But independently of all such criticism of its actions, independently of the fitness or unfitness of any particular Chartered Company to carry out the task of Government entrusted to it, he dwelt on the inherent objection that he saw in government by such associations. In his own words :—

“What is the true root objection to a Chartered Company ? Surely it is plain enough. It is this : that a Chartered Company can only be established by confusing two things which are absolutely irreconcilable, and ought never to be associated. I mean the prerogative of governing

men on the one hand, and the desire of making money on the other. The right to govern men is one of the very highest duties which can be entrusted to a man or body of men. The pursuit of money cannot be described in any such terms. It is not necessary to speak evil of money-hunting; every man in his station and degree is a money-hunter—that is to say, he tries to earn money by the exercise of his strength, his wits, his ingenuity; or his hands. There are millions of honest men engaged in the pursuit, there are also, without doubt, a very large number of men who are not all honest but very much the contrary. How far the latter preponderate in the ‘Kaffir Market’ and other South African enterprises is a matter of opinion. But let it be understood once for all that against the Chartered Company as a money-hunting corporation I have not a word to say. How men make or lose their money is not a matter of national concern until it becomes a subject of investigation in a criminal court. . . . What matters to us very much is that men should not be allowed to couple with their business of money-making, the right to govern any one of Her Majesty’s subjects, or to pledge the word and to involve the honour of the Imperial Government.

That is, however, exactly the situation which the existence of a Chartered Company creates. ‘The greatest trust between man and man,’ says Bacon, ‘is the trust of giving counsel.’ In order that counsel in matters of government may be faithfully given, in order that that great trust may be honourably fulfilled, our people have devoted 800 years of their history to building up institutions from which every taint of self-interest, every private base motive should be banished. That they have succeeded altogether no man can truly say. Human nature has always its bad side, and the best efforts often fall short of the ideal. But the hope and the ideal have always been there, and century by century we have seemed to get nearer to their fulfilment and attainment, till now it is a true boast that no government in the world is so uncorrupt and so incorruptible as our own, and that a British officer wherever he serves throughout the world is a man whose word may be believed, and whose honour is above suspicion. And yet, after all these centuries of effort, what do we now do? We deliberately hand over an enormous portion of the empire to be ruled and administered not by the British Government, not by the officers of the Crown, not even by a Colonial administration, whose acts, at any rate, are open to the free criticism of a popular Parliament, but by a trading company.

It cannot be said that we are without experience in this matter. Every one knows the history of the East India Company. From beginning to end, or, at any rate, until very near the end, the curse and danger of the East India Company was the ‘private trade’; in other words, the mixing up of the duty of government with the love of gain. So long ago as the reign of James I. pregnant warning was given on this subject to the directors of the East India Company, and the warning holds good for all time. Let the value of a man’s shares at his bankers depend upon how he decides in a matter of public duty, and there is an end of all assurance of good government.

Clive knew the danger, and spent some of the best years of his life in fighting against it. . . . But despite all Clive's endeavours the system was too strong, and the splendid history of the East India Company was marred and defaced for ever by the gross corruption which grew up within it. It is true that during the last thirty years of its history, when it had ceased to be in any sense a trading corporation, the East India Company was a noble example of what Englishmen can do. But it was then to all intents and purposes merely a branch of the ordinary administration of the Crown, governed by strict rules, and presided over by imperial officers of the highest character. Certainly the history of the East India Company is not an encouragement to us to associate government and trade.

I believe that if it be necessary to add to our Empire, it is possible to do so without having resort to associations of this kind. . . . If it were impossible, then I still maintain that we are paying too high a price for the advantage we hope to gain. . . . We are attempting to combine two things which, on every principle of ethics and good sense, should be eternally dissociated, viz. the government of human beings and the pursuit of wealth. . . . We are finding out how much mischief such a combination may bring about. I trust the lesson may be sufficient to prevent our ever running the risk again." ¹

Oakeley's attitude towards the Chartered Company was from first to last one of distrust, and where he distrusted he distrusted vehemently, and could not perhaps sufficiently see another side of the question to that which he saw so clearly and forcibly. It should, however, be remembered that it was never on small grounds of expediency and interest, and never on any question of personal feeling or antagonism, that he wrote and spoke strongly; but always on broad lines of imperial or national policy, on points where he believed our national conscience or honour to be implicated.

After one of his speeches in the House of Commons he wrote: "I know you do not entirely agree with my view about Rhodes and South Africa, and that you would rather that I had left unsaid, or perhaps said differently, some of the things which I did say. Still you are quite right to say all you can to me that is sympathetic just now, for of course it is very hard fighting an uphill battle in which one has little guidance. . . . One makes mistakes—many—but in this instance I feel satisfied on the whole that, allowing for all my errors, I have taken the right line. Therefore I

¹ Article contributed to the *Daily Chronicle*, 1895.

am fairly cheerful, and your letter, being yours—and being a very interesting and helpful one into the bargain—makes me more cheerful and serene—(not at all unconscious though, you may be quite assured, of the imperfections of manner and accomplishment)."

CHAPTER VII

“ I remember the black wharves and the slips,
And the sea-tides tossing free,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea.”

LONGFELLOW.

Holidays and Playtimes—A Barge Skipper—*The Four Brothers*—
“ Our Toys.”

OAKELEY could hardly have worked as strenuously as he did, if he had not had in equal degree the capacity for enjoying play. He threw just as much spirit and energy into his children's games and plays as into his public work, and he seemed to get more pleasure out of playtimes and out of holidays than any one I have ever known. Many holidays were spent in journeys abroad; many other such journeys were planned and carried out only in imagination.

His travels were very varied, and included every European state (except, I think, Portugal), the only constant feature in them all being that they always somehow took us to where ships and dockyards, or soldiers and manœuvres were to be seen; and that they were always made as far as possible by sea, in ships of every kind, from the little French coasting steamers that work between Mediterranean ports, to the big German liners on which we made our journeys to Italy. Thus it happened that, often as we had been to Genoa, we had invariably approached the city from its beautiful seaward side and never from the land. We went by sea direct to Bordeaux, to Genoa, to Marseilles, to Gibraltar, to Bremen, and Kiel, and later to Malta, to the Cape of Good Hope, and to the West Indies.

Our journeys had a way, as I have said, of taking us

frequently to places where dockyards, guns, or fortifications could be seen, and as all roads lead to Rome, our paths had a way of leading us to these centres of naval or military activity. We would start with the intention of wandering in the chestnut woods of the Apennines, and on from thence to Italian cities of the Middle Ages, or perhaps of sailing from one Mediterranean coast town to another, as we found boats or little steamers to travel by. But the mountain roads of the Apennines would lead us unexpectedly within such easy reach of Spezzia that *not* to visit Shelley's home (and incidentally the dockyard of Spezzia) would have seemed a sheer waste of a golden opportunity, and when you sail in the Mediterranean round the Gulf of Lyons, supposing your heart to be set upon seeing the newest type of French battleship or cruiser, the beautiful harbour of Toulon simply cries to you to come inside to anchor there, and to spend happy days with friendly French naval officers, and in the stokeholds of their men-of-war. Even the peaceful tourist-haunted valleys and passes of Switzerland used to lead us somehow to Thun at moments when artillery practice could be most advantageously watched and studied.

"I have had splendid luck," he told me after one long and successful day in a French dockyard. He had had the good fortune to meet on the landing-stage Lieutenant —, a French naval officer, to whom we had been able to show some little attention in London, and all was at once made smooth and easy. Another day he came back laughing to tell me that having been welcomed on a French battleship, and an officer deputed to show him all that he desired, the captain gave him a polite message to be conveyed with his compliments, and with the assurances of his high consideration, to "Monsieur votre père," promising to call upon M. Arnold-Forster père in the course of the afternoon to have some naval talk with him. Oakeley said that it took him some seconds before he realised that his "mien of youth" had led to the mistake, and that he was supposed to be his own son. The captain and officers who dined with us the next evening at our hotel described the incident with much glee to me, explaining that they had read "la brochure 'Dans le blockhaus' de M. Arnold-Forster," and other writings and

speeches of his on naval subjects, and had expected him to be a deputy of more advanced age and important appearance.

One very pleasant holiday voyage in May 1898 took us to Gibraltar. Leaving behind him for a few weeks his duties in Parliament, Oakeley carried out this long-planned journey. He had always intended to go out some day to visit the grave where his father was buried near the Rock. And besides this special reason, his sense of the importance of Gibraltar to our fleets in the Mediterranean, made him most anxious to see for himself the actual progress that had been made in the great works that were being carried out under Lord Goschen's Admiralty administration, to see all that was being done in the construction of the new docks and mole, and to get a clear understanding of the general plans, and arrangements for defence. We had many friends there; General Richardson was in command of the artillery, and extended his old friendship with William Arnold to William Arnold's son. He, and many friends in the Grenadier Guards and other regiments that were quartered there, made our visit a very full and interesting one.

"It was good of you to write to me as you did about Papa's grave," Oakeley wrote to his mother. "To me the sight of it brought many thoughts, and the thought of you was first among them. In me the view of this honoured grave can only stir a sentiment—as indeed it does very deeply—but to you it would recall the memory of a known and beloved personality. And so, not unnaturally when I look at the inscription, and see the familiar name, and the record of so young a life; I think first of you whom I know and love so well, who loved him and who wrote to him those letters which I am certain must have been the greatest treasure and encouragement that he possessed in his exile.

"We have really had a delightful time in Gibraltar, and every one has been extraordinarily kind to us. I have already been up the Rock twice, once with the Governor, who lent me a horse and took me up to some of the batteries which I particularly wanted to see. The views from the top are splendid, with the fine outline of "Apes' Hill" and the bold African peaks to the south, the curve of the Spanish shore, and the mountain country inland to the north-east;

and to the west the sweep of the bay, the shipping, and Algeciras, much nearer than it ought to be.

"I have been through the galleries, round the dockyard, along the mole, in fact everywhere ; and I am sorry to have to admit that only one conclusion is possible, namely, that in its present condition the whole place is a gigantic 'white elephant,' of no practical use, or at any rate of such small value that our only *raison d'être* for being here is to keep the Rock from others who might not be hampered by the conditions which make it so useless to us at present. When the new harbour works and docks are completed the circumstances will be altered to some extent, and the place will have value as a repairing station for the fleet as long as Spain is friendly or remains a tenth-rate Power, and is either unwilling or unable to make a serious attack upon the place. Of course I do not mean that the Spaniards or any one else can ever take the Rock. There is not the wildest chance of that, but to destroy the shipping in the harbour, and to ruin the docks from the Spanish land, would be a mere holiday employment for modern guns, *if there were any*, which, happily, at present there are not.

"I sailed last Thursday in the first yacht race of the season with Fawkes, who is Attorney-General here ; it was a very stormy day, and the two big boats which competed against us suffered serious damages, and had to put back. We had the good luck to get over the course in fine style, with nothing worse than a savage tossing and a very complete soaking.

"On Saturday we crossed to Tangier on one of the Government boats in a very heavy sea which flooded the decks and compelled us to go at half-speed. Tell F—— not to believe the accounts she gets of Africa ; they are all wrong. I expected on landing to be scorched by the vertical rays of a tropical sun during the day, and to be kept awake by the roaring of the lions ! As a matter of fact we landed in a blazing storm of cold wind and still colder rain, under a grey and gloomy sky, and at night it was the braying of an ass, and a prolonged and exasperating dog-fight, that interfered with my slumbers.

"However, despite cold and wet which lasted till I left,

I was thrilled by Tangier. I am told it is not unlike Damascus ; it may be, it is utterly unlike anything I have ever seen till now. The narrow streets, the white-walled, flat-roofed houses with no external windows, the camels, the mules, the donkeys, the dirt, the smells, and, oddest of all, the people, made up a picture of Eastern life and the Eastern world which I cannot describe half as well as a score of books you have read, but which no book-reading has ever enabled me to realise. You must see M——'s pictures of the place and of some of the strange people. Stately Bedouins in long blue robes, Jews in black gaberdines and skull-caps, 'Berberines,' villainous-looking horse thieves whom everybody justly suspects, negroes as black as my hat, Spaniards, and strangest of all perhaps, the 'Riffs' from the country to the east of Tangier, all of them, young and old, wearing a short pig-tail on the right side of the head, cultivated and preserved so that the Angel of Death may have something to snatch at, and be able to waft the owner up to Paradise.

"M—— remains in Tangier to sketch, to explore the country and the gardens, and to see something more of Africa. Yesterday being the Queen's birthday, Gibraltar was given over to salutes and to *feux de joie*. The firing of the guns from the Rock galleries was a sight not to be missed. The Spanish Governor for the first time for fifty years did not come over. He pleaded the state of siege, and I think that in view of the line we have elected to take, he was quite justified in stopping away."

Oakeley certainly found much to see and to learn in Gibraltar, and the knowledge that he gained at this time stood him in good stead, and was of great service to him when he became Secretary to the Admiralty and its official spokesman in the House of Commons.

On the military as well as on the naval side he found much to interest him. A series of his letters on army questions had just appeared in *The Times*, powerfully backed by *The Times* itself ; and from officers of all ranks and regiments the writer met with cordial welcome and encouragement. In a letter to Mrs. Forster I wrote : "They welcome him cordially here as one who has understood their problems

and difficulties, and over and over again the officers come to tell me how much the appearance of the *Army Letters* meant to them, how eagerly they watched for them day by day, and how entirely they represent the soldiers' needs and views."

Besides Gibraltar, Oakeley managed to visit almost every important dockyard in Europe. Everything connected with ships and the sea was full of interest to him. When he was living in London he used to go down to the river to watch the sea-going barges passing up and down; bringing their loads of stone, cement, or hay to the busy wharves in the city, or up the river to Battersea. Often, too, he would go down the Thames as far as Greenwich or Greenhithe, and, hailing one of the passing barges, would sail in her up the Medway, or round the Essex coast. The sea-going barge folk are a fine race of men, and we found them very pleasant and kindly hosts. They are a hardy people and admirable sailors. With very small crews they work their flat-bottomed boats up and down the Channel in all weathers, carrying their cargoes into the French harbours, and up the Rhine. The Londoner who only sees these barges with lowered masts, deep laden down to the water's edge, creeping along, or towed in long procession up the river by a panting tug, would hardly recognise them when with their great sails spread they sail down the "London river" and past the Nore. To Oakeley they always seemed to be full of the romance of the sea, and he longed ardently to possess a barge of his own, to live on it and to sail it. We were warmly encouraged in the idea by the wife of a Medway barge skipper who used to accompany her husband, and who told us that if we ever lived on a barge we should find life on shore "terribly cramped like" after it. (There was much more truth in her words than any one could have imagined who had seen the tiny cabin in which she lived.) In the barge of our dreams, of course, the great space of the hold, where the heavy loads of stone and cement are carried, would be occupied by cabins, and would give accommodation far more spacious than would be found on many a big yacht. It was a long time before Oakeley realised this dream and actually became a barge owner. In 1896 our friend, Mr. Wyllie, R.A., told us of a



"THE FOUR BROTHERS."

barge planned and fitted very much on the lines we wanted, which was for sale, and which, though old, might suit us well. Mr. Wyllie, who painted many of his pictures from on board his own sailing boats, entered into a partnership with Oakeley, and they soon became joint-owners of this boat, re-christening her in honour of our children, *The Four Brothers*. We were much more fortunate with *The Four Brothers* than was Robert Louis Stevenson with his famous *Eleven Thousand Virgins of Cologne*, and for seven or eight years, long and delightful summer holidays were spent on her. Her first voyage abroad with us was to Holland. *The Four Brothers*, having sailed across the North Sea, was tranquilly towed by a sedate and leisurely Belgian horse up the Belgian and Dutch canals, until we reached the broad estuary of the Scheldt, and made our way under sail to the Zuyder Zee, whose wide expanse and shallow waters suit a Thames barge so well.

Another year it was Lord Kelvin's suggestion that we should start on our cruise from opposite the House of Commons. He took a deep and sympathetic interest in our barge, and urged us to have her ready at Westminster Bridge on the last day of the Session, to weigh anchor and to slip down the river and out to sea as soon as possible after the House rose. In this way he said the sense of making our escape from London and Parliament would be emphasised. His plan certainly gave us to the utmost the true holiday feeling, and it gave us also a beautiful experience of London, its bridges, wharves, and Pool, seen from the river at dawn on a summer's morning. Our roomy cabins on *The Four Brothers* made her very comfortable to live on, and Oakeley's great delight was to have his children with him in all his cruises. His partnership with Mr. Wyllie was a most happy and successful one, and it was with many regrets that it was brought to an end, when in 1902 the much-loved *Four Brothers* finally passed into other hands. We tried other boats afterwards—a schooner which he owned for a time, and then a small steam yacht,—but the pleasures of a barge-life still held our affections, and no other boat ever pleased either of us as well.

For many years—until, indeed, he was forbidden by

doctor's orders to ride at all—Oakeley's bicycle was a constant companion and pleasure to him. He loved the long country rides when, as he said, the burdens of work and the cares of business and politics slipped away from him and were forgotten. The joys of the "open road" called to him. To go forth on his favourite "Green Fly," with no very definite destination, to ride where the fancy led him, and as the wind favoured his course, pleased him always, and gave him a great sense of freedom.

In this way he learned to know, with a curious and intimate knowledge, the highways, lanes, and villages of southern England.

After a long all-night sitting in the House in 1896 he wrote to his sister: "Our all-night sitting was tedious and humiliating, as usual. But luckily the night was fine, and the Terrace between four and five o'clock in the morning was perfect. I got my bicycle down, and rode madly up and down the long asphalted drive from the Speaker's Court to the House of Lords. This did me good, and I permitted certain choice spirits the privilege of riding my steed, which they highly appreciated.

"My bicycle is really an enormous addition to life, and I am devoted to it. I can run fifty miles and feel as fit after it as before I started. I whirl through the land on my steel steed, and I get over 18 feet of ground at a single turn of my feet. The nearest thing to 'seven-leagued boots,' is it not?"

"No, these are not *our* toys, these are *father's* toys," a visitor was once told by our children, when he called and found them deeply engaged with the engines, points, and signals of a railway system, worked by electricity, and complete in all its details. Oakeley certainly never lost his fondness for his toys, and the railways which he and his boys delighted to plan and to work at Bassett Down and in London, and the miniature building-stones with which together they reared palaces, and built castles, railway stations, and cathedrals, absorbed him for the time as wholly as if the traffic arrangements of a great railway depended on the smooth working of his lines and points, and the beauty of London on the proportions of his stone buildings.

CHAPTER VIII

"Beyond the book his teaching sped,
He left on whom he taught the trace
Of kinship with the deathless dead,
And faith in all the Island Race."

H. NEWBOLT.

A *History of England*—The children for whom he wrote—Letters written to his mother—Private letters as a revelation of a man's character—Mrs. Forster's death in 1899—*The War Office, the Army, and the Empire*.

FOR Oakeley, as for his grandfather, Thomas Arnold, the continuity of our history, the close connection of our country's past with the present, were ideas constantly and vividly realised, and they were reflected in all that he wrote. Every city or town that he went to became interesting by reason of its history. The roads that he bicycled on, the names of the villages and streets that he passed through, were links in the same story. His parliamentary life was to him infinitely more picturesque and interesting than it is to many, because of the fulness with which he realised the "storied past" of Parliament, its customs and traditions. The stones of Westminster Hall and of the crypt of St. Stephen's never ceased to thrill his imagination with their association with six hundred years of our national life. "I never fully understood the romance and wonder of the place," one of his colleagues said to me, "until I heard him telling to a group of children the stories connected with the spot of ground on which they were standing." Although no great historical scholar, he had, far more than many greater historians, the gift of vivid seeing. To go with him to one of the great battlefields of Europe, to Waterloo, to Leipzig, to Dresden, or to Gravelotte, was to get an extraordinarily graphic picture of the position and massing of the armies that fought there.

He seemed actually to *see* the lines on which the battle went, the movements and direction of the forces that were engaged, the turn of genius or of fortune that decided the fate of the battle and campaign, and for the moment the battle would seem to his hearer as actual a vision as it was to himself. In much the same way he seemed to be able to see and to picture the lives of the men and women whose figures pass across the stage of our history, the kings, churchmen, merchants, and peasants—"English men and women, very much like ourselves, who lived in the places in which we live, who did their own work in their own day as we do our work in ours, and who have left traces of their work in almost all that we see, in our roads, in our buildings, in our language, in our laws, in our names, our amusements, and our customs."¹

It was in this spirit, and in the belief that men will care more about their country and serve it better as better citizens, if they have a knowledge of its history, that he wrote for the children in English schools the stories of English history to which he gave the title *Things New and Old*.

He had a clear idea of the incidents and stories that he wished to tell, and of the way in which he wished to tell them.

"To be told that the emperor Claudius or Severus constructed a road from Londinium to Deva, is to be told a fact which may or may not linger in the recollection of a child until the day of examination; but to stand on the Edgware Road, and to know that you are standing on the Watling Street whose stony pavement actually rang to the tramp of the Tenth Legion, and whose straight course may be traced over hill and dale, right through our midland counties, from London to St. Albans, St. Albans to Dunstable, through Weedon and Wroxeter, across the Severn to Chester, is to put a bridge across 1500 years of time, and to be one step nearer to understanding the meaning of the continuity of our history.

"The story of English history is rich and varied as a great romance. The Englishman who loves to study the history of his country can, indeed, like the householder of Scripture, bring forth from his 'treasure'—the rich store-

¹ Preface to *Things New and Old*.

house of the records of England—"things new and old." Our history touches our daily life in a thousand places—the form of an arch, the spelling of a word, the turn of a phrase, the cut of a coat, the direction of a road,—all have their story, if we can only read it."¹

The seven volumes of these stories were arranged to suit the requirements of the school standards and the regulations of the Board of Education.

The great success that they met with led him to embark on the larger and harder task of writing a short *History of England*, including in it some of the stories and chapters contained in *Things New and Old*. To write a short history at all is to be confronted at once with grave difficulties, for it can only be written by leaving out very much that one is unwilling to sacrifice, and to apply the title *A History of England* to a single small volume might well seem presumptuous.

"The record of our national life," he wrote in his preface, "is so full, so long, so crowded with incidents, that even great histories, written in many volumes, by master hands, can only illustrate and cannot exhaust the theme."

But he would not call his book by any such repellent title as a "Summary" or an "Outline of English History,"—names which he felt excluded the idea of the romance and interest that he wanted his book to convey.

The *History* was finished, after several years of work, in 1897. Chapter after chapter, as it was written, was read aloud to our elder children. If his young judges were interested, keen, and wideawake—well and good! The chapter was considered to be "passed" and approved by the children's verdict. "If it does not interest the boys it is simply a sign that it is badly told and must be written again," he told me, when I mourned over the destruction of a chapter in manuscript.

The history of the growth of English freedom and English institutions runs throughout the book, and the making of our overseas Empire is graphically told. Perhaps most of all he enjoyed writing the chapters in which are told the story of Elizabeth's adventurers—of the voyage of

¹ Preface to *Things New and Old*.

the *Golden Hind*, of Hawkins, Frobisher, Drake, and Raleigh, of the discovery of the New World, and the wonders and treasures of the newly-discovered lands.

Those were the pages which he loved to write. But the parts of his book that he was proud of, were the pictures which he chose with such care to illustrate it, and, above all, the "tags," or quotations, that he placed at the head of every chapter. His wide and varied reading and his memory helped him greatly in the selection of these, and he drew them from all sorts of books, ancient and modern, from "bulletins" and despatches, from the speeches of Cromwell, Burke, and Sheridan, from our national poets, and from the English Bible.

"How glad I am," wrote Mrs. Forster in one of her letters to him at this time, "that you are getting near the end of your book. That condensing a century in a hydraulic press, as you aptly describe it, must indeed be difficult. But your book has, so far, come out of the process full of life and interest. . . ."

"I well recall," writes Mrs. Evelyn Cecil, "the conversation I had with Mr. Arnold-Forster about his *History*, . . . and the pleasure it gave him to know what a joy his work had been to children.

We were most anxious to teach our girl and boy English history so as to give them an intelligent interest, and not merely to produce a confusion of dates and battles in their brains. I despaired of finding any suitable book until I became acquainted with Mr. Arnold-Forster's. I first saw it being read by a child of seven to himself, so I gave it for a birthday present to our eldest girl, and watched the result. I soon found the success was complete. When I was about to read aloud, and gave a choice of adventure stories or fairy tales, the answer was, 'May I fetch my history book?' And even when read systematically in lesson time to both children the volume lost none of its charm. It is written in such clear and simple language that the words never required a gloss, and over and over again I found the question a passage had raised in the children's minds had been anticipated, and the explanation followed, telling them exactly what they wanted to know. The book has succeeded in making the growth of the constitution and laws of England as attractive as her battles and victories, and it brings a picture of the olden time and its manners and customs before the children; and yet the whole is kept in proper proportion.

I have deeply regretted that I cannot tell the author, as I did before, that the *Citizen Reader* is as eagerly listened to as the *History*. I only lately began it. . . . Again it appears to interest the children as much as a story, only with the additional charm of reality."

Our Great City, a book about London, written especially for the children of London, and inspired by the same ideas that made him write the *History of England*, followed the *History* in 1900, and was the last book of this kind that he was able to write. Other books were conceived and planned; one idea that attracted him greatly being that of a new *Citizen Reader*, to be written after living for a time in Canada itself, that should help Canadian children to realise the glories, the possibilities, and the responsibilities of their country and Empire; but the pressure of public life and work prevented the accomplishment of this idea, and it remained one of those unwritten books which are ever the best books.

An index to the work and writing that he actually accomplished in these busy years will be found at the end of this volume. All that he did and thought was told at the time, in the series of letters written week by week to his mother. They tell her about the business and tone of the House of Commons, about the progress of the book that he was writing, about the friends that we were seeing from day to day, and often about his children, their lives and character. These letters lie before me as I write, and on them in her beautiful handwriting, are his mother's notes of the special events that he had recorded in them for her, the political interviews and conversations, or the incidents of a debate that he tells her about; with here and there her special note of loving comment written on the outside of some of the letters in which his great love and tenderness for her had been outpoured.

Many of these letters, and extracts from them, have been used throughout these pages. Many more could have been used if space had permitted; but, because of the perfect intimacy and entire confidence that existed between this mother and son, much that he wrote to her is too deeply and personally intimate to be printed.

Indeed, one of the most perplexing problems that arises in writing such a book as this, is the difficulty of deciding whether or not to include some of these more intimate letters. Letters not meant for other eyes, sacred in their revelation of love and tenderness. And yet they, and perhaps

they alone, can reveal and explain that side of a man's nature which he keeps turned away from the world, and which can be known, if known at all, at most to one or to two. In any biography or memoir much must always be left unsaid, unexplained. The history of a man's *vie intime* cannot be written, and a full half of his life must be a private book, sealed to the world, to which it has no right of access. His deepest and most vital experiences, the hours which, when looking back on his life, he would say counted for most in it, much of what he learned and thought and suffered must always remain part of the hidden life, that belongs to him alone.

The judgments that we form of one another, the picture that we make, even of our friends, must be based on very limited and partial knowledge; whilst the judgments formed by the public of the men who come in any way prominently before it, have a still slenderer basis of knowledge and fact. The general impression of the public is probably made up of the sum of a number of very slight things; an idea conveyed by an anecdote or picture; or by a newspaper article, the generalisation perhaps of a journalist whose information and opportunity for forming an accurate judgment may be as slight as is that of the public. Opportunities for obtaining a fuller insight and understanding are very seldom forthcoming.

We know from the memories of men and women of his time, and from contemporary memoirs, that when the "Life" of Oakeley's grandfather appeared, the private journals that it contained were a revelation to his generation of the nature and depth of Dr. Arnold's character. During his lifetime many men had thought of him chiefly as a keen and ardent fighter for the great causes that he had made his own, and had admired or disapproved his passionate advocacy of his political principles. The publication of these passages from his personal journals revealed, as perhaps nothing else would have done, the depth of the religious thought that was the inspiration of his work, and the sincerity, beauty, and intensity of the underlying spiritual life. In the same way it is possible that some of a man's intimate letters, in so far as they touch on his

life and actions, and throw light on the beliefs that inspired his work, and on the spirit in which it was carried out, may be the only available means by which his character, and the character of his work and public life, can be rightly understood. By his actions and published words, it is true, his public career must be weighed and judged. But with a clearer and fuller knowledge of the man himself, misconceptions are often removed, and quite another side of his personality revealed to us from that which has been generally seen and recognised; and this knowledge may perhaps only be learnt, after his lifetime, from some of his letters in which he speaks without reserve to those who stood to him in the most intimate of human relationships. It is in this belief that the letters that are given here have been included.

"Christmas, 1894.

"I thought of you all a great deal on Christmas Day, and pictured you to myself in that dear familiar dining-room. No gathering can ever recall fuller and sweeter memories to me than the Fox How Christmas party. To me you have always been, and are now, and always must be, dearest mother, the central and most beloved figure; and it is round you that all those dear memories of loved and honoured faces that are gone, group themselves. . . . The brightness, and the goodness, and the wisdom of many of those I am thinking of are substantive positive things which I live on with all their essential qualities of goodness and wisdom still remaining as possessions to us who remember them. . . . As for me, I see too many things clearly with my intellect which I do not hold or grasp with my soul at all. . . . I know that it is so, and you know it; but my love for you goes very deep into my heart, and it is as true a thing as there is in my composition. That I can write to you now, after so many are gone, and that ere long I trust I may see you and talk to you, is a mercy and a privilege for which I believe I am truly and properly grateful; but only do not fear that the value of what you have been to me, and are, will *ever* go out of my life. I treasure far too well even memories which mean much less to me, to let this

slip from my possession. I shall see you soon, I hope. Before Parliament meets, I must come down to you."

"31st July 1895.

"MY DARLING MOTHER—I write a line to give you my love on your birthday. I am sending you my most precious possessions on Friday. It is my most heartfelt wish that my dear boys may have the privilege of being near you, and seeing you often, and that being so, I think they could not be better bestowed than at the little house in Burley. As for me, I shall be greatly disappointed if I do not get down for at least a day or two, and hear the 'pattering of the little feet of all the cousins' there, which Willy, with Francie's pretty verses in his mind, tells me I may hear when I get to Wharfeside.

"You are still to me, dear mother, the best and wisest guide, and friend in the world, and your birthday is truly a red-letter day in the calendar of my individual life.—I am, your very loving son, ——."

To his Mother. On the Letters of Matthew Arnold.

"9 EVELYN GARDENS,
3rd December 1895.

" I have read a good deal of the two volumes of letters.¹ I am indeed absorbed in the book, giving all my spare time to it, though that just now does not come to much. The more I read, the more pleasure I get from the reading. With each page it becomes more clear that these letters are to be read and valued, not for the peculiar style, or even the interest of one letter, but for the truly beautiful picture they give, taken as a whole, of what was a noble life. It is beautiful, this fine equable clear spirit keeping its way fixed and unperturbed through the troubles of the world. The thing is not new to us, nor to us a revelation at all. On the contrary, it was our privilege, who knew Uncle Matt, to understand what a sweet and beautiful nature he had; and that is why I think we all like to see the letters published. But to some of us the knowledge came rather later on, when we were capable of

¹ *Letters of Matthew Arnold*, published 1895.

understanding and judging, and these volumes are very welcome, because they extend so widely the knowledge we had, and confirm so amply the opinion we had formed.

"Then how interesting are the echoes all through of the thoughts which found their highest expression in the poems. Truly, the poems were the natural outlets of a fine spirit, and in perfect harmony with the life of the man. Never were poems less open to the charge of being manufactured. So at least it seems to me.

"Again, dear mother, it is with peculiar interest that I note how the letters which move and attract me most, are almost, without exception, letters to you. This is natural, for, apart from the fact that the mere fact of their recalling my thoughts to you places them first in my esteem, there is the fact, written plainly on the face of the letters, that when he wrote them he knew and felt that he was writing to an intellectual equal as well as a very beloved sister; and thought and style are his best,—true and without 'pose.'

"How can you wonder that after reading this book, and dearest father's life, not to speak of your own dear letters, and my knowledge of the lives of those who are gone, and those who are still with us, I should look, as I always have looked, on that generation of my family as one of men and women whose like I shall never see again; and who me give a sense of power and nobility and distinction, which I find nowhere else, and which is still, and must always be the inspiration of almost all the good that is in me, or can ever come out of me.

"Once more with regard to the letters, as a book, there are too many—not for my taste—but for art's sake. But I am almost reconciled to that now; so much is good, so much is very good. George Russell's preface, too, which I had not read when I wrote to you last, I like thoroughly. It is true, appreciative, and not too 'heavy' in touch at any point."

In reply to this letter Mrs. Forster wrote:—

". . . All that you say about Uncle Matt's letters delights me—it is truly and beautifully said. Yes, the book

is indeed the picture of a beautiful and noble life unconsciously painted by himself—and it is true as you say that, though so simple in its details, you see his poems in it.

“It is sweet to me that you all feel such pleasure in his dear letters to me. It was a great effort to me to let them be published. Indeed I had almost decided *not*, till I found how you all wished it—Flo and Mary especially—and now I am glad that I did. He was indeed a loving and beloved brother; and the days when we used to walk on Loughrigg together—he talking of, and repeating his poetry—and much else—come back to me. Farewell my dearest; you can never tell me too much of your own history—even if it were not your own history and Mary’s, outside events are most interesting to such hermits as we are.”

To his Mother. On the Ottawa Conference.

“9 EVELYN GARDENS,
14th July 1894.

“. . . I have been very pleased with the result of the Ottawa Conference, but wish we could have had fuller reports. The delegates seem to have acted with a very wise and commendable caution, but their spirit throughout has been admirable. I see nothing but good in the whole meeting, and I hope great things in the future. Is it not significant that these representatives of the great Anglo-Saxon Colonies should have sailed past the United States, to do their work at Ottawa, and that not one word should have been said about the neighbouring Republic in the whole course of the proceedings? There has been much talk in the past about Imperial Federation being incomplete without the United States. I do not sympathise with this view at all. The States are now inhabited by a mixed population, including, I believe, twelve million Germans and Slavs, as many Irish, and as many negroes. Now that the Colonies are beginning to realise that, as members of a United Empire, with the temperate regions of the world in their hands, and with the great treasure of India as a common possession, they may be greater, richer, stronger, and more homogeneous than the United States; I think

the danger of any hasty movement in the direction I have referred to is past, or is rapidly passing.

"On all sides I see signs which encourage me to believe that our Federation idea is growing fast. How I wish dearest Father could have seen the transformation in tone and opinion which has been effected, since he first gave the weight of his name and character to the movement, and thereby made it a matter of practical politics."

To a dear friend who had acted as his secretary.

"MY DEAR A.—I am sending you a small Christmas present in the shape of a writing-table. It seems to me an article in harmony with 'secretarial functions. . . .'

"If only the parcel bore with it the sum of my obligations to you during the last two years, no van in London would bear the burden. Take it, therefore, as an outward and visible sign of a very real inward emotion. I cannot tell you how much your friendship, your help, and your everlasting and inexhaustible patience and affection have meant to me. I often feel, and the feeling saddens me when I am alone, that I go through the world too richly endowed with the sympathy, friendship, and love of men and women far better than myself, to whom I make and can make no adequate return, and of whose goodwill I am most unworthy. It is a great and precious privilege. There is no treasure in life like it. As to you, I am not going to quarrel as to whether you are good, bad, or indifferent, I know you won't allow me my opinion, whatever it may be. But I know what it is. I shall say, though, that your friendship is of infinite value to me, and that the day I forfeit it would be one of the darkest in my life.—Yours always——"

For his mother's birthday in 1897 he writes:—

“ROYAL SOUTHERN YACHT CLUB,
SOUTHAMPTON.

" . . . I have to thank you, dearest mother, for many acts of kindness this year, as in all other years, but, most of all, I thank you for your letters, which you never fail to

send me, and which are some of the greatest treasures and comforts that I have.

"There are many secrets, which—by the way, are no secrets—that I should like to learn from you; but in all your letters there is one lesson which I read perhaps more plainly than any other—which I would more willingly learn and practise than any other—that every year, dear mother, if I may say so to you with great respect, you seem to have learnt in greater perfection—I mean the will and the power to find out the best instead of the worst in everything and every person. I know I do not do it, I wish I did, and I often hate myself for not doing it. You do—and that is, among a host of other reasons, why your letters are so good for me to receive, and why it is so well worth your while to write them. I feel the lack of that spirit in myself very much; the more so, because I can see the rightness of it, and the beauty and value of it, as plain as I can see anything in the world. I don't expect you know how uniformly your letters give me a little corrective to my stupid acidity, and how often you set my point of observation on the bright side of a man or a situation, instead of on the dark side. That I am not much more crabbed and evil-speaking than I am is due to you. The first and most obvious moral of all which is, dearest mother, that you are never to think time wasted in writing even the shortest line to me; and that your view of men, women and things is very precious indeed to me."

In October 1899, in the month which saw the beginning of the South African War, and the first engagements near Ladysmith, Oakeley's beloved mother died. Her last illness, at Malvern, in the house of her sister, Mrs. Cropper, was so brief that there was but a very short time in which to realise its gravity before the end came to the beautiful life that had so blessed others, and that had been so revered and loved. Some idea of the relationship that existed between her and the children of her adoption will have been gathered from her son's letters. And in them is reflected to some extent a picture of her which, though it is very far from being complete, may serve to give some impression of



Mrs W. C. Forster.

LONDON EDWARD ARNOLD 1910

the beauty and power of her life and influence. This cannot be described better or more fitly than in these words of her sister, Miss Arnold :—

“Fox How, *October 22nd*, 1899.

“MY DEAREST OAKELEY—I think very much of you, and of your special share in this great sorrow. I know how deeply, how passionately, you loved your precious mother, and how terrible will be the loss to you of her perfect sympathy and understanding of the difficulties and anxieties of your public life, and of her wise and gentle counsel, as well as the loss of her tender affection for you and yours.

“It will always be a happiness to you to think of the joy it gave her to think of your happy family life and of her love for dear M. and your children, and that they will always remember her.

“Of late years your political career and interests have been to her naturally the closest tie with the interests she had shared so long. One cannot say of her whether she was the better Christian or the better patriot—the two were blended in so wonderful a fashion. I have never known any woman with such a clear intellectual grasp as she had ; what she knew she knew, and with all her strong, almost passionate feeling, this intellectual clearness gave her a fairness and moderation of view which made every thought and opinion impressive.

“Oh, my dear Oakeley, it is a blessing past words to have known and loved her, to have been loved by her, and to have her precious memory as an inspiration and abiding presence in the years to come. My love to dear M., who has been so true a daughter to her.—Your loving,

F. ARNOLD.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge's description of another beautiful Englishwoman might have been written of her. “Full of that pure, unquestioning, simple, yet profound and practical religion, which if it has passed away from amongst us, has left behind it undying influences, and examples much easier to reverence than to follow or surpass.”

In the summer of 1900, when the South African War

had been going on for nine months, a short series of letters on some of the lessons taught by the war were written by Oakeley. They were published in September of that year, under the title, *The War Office, the Army, and the Empire*, and Lord Rosebery contributed a preface to the volume. These letters were written with the object of stimulating interest in the problem of national defence, and of awakening the country to the dangers, which Oakeley believed threatened the country, unless some great changes were made in our military organisation.

If no great space is devoted to this book it is not because it was without importance at the time, or that the lessons it teaches have lost their value, but because the identical problems that it deals with have to occupy a large space in later chapters, and to dwell on them at length here would involve unnecessary repetition.

The book was written because he believed that certain lessons were to be learned from the war that was in progress, and that unless they were learned before the return of peace, we, being "an easy-going people and experts in the art of forgetting," there would, as soon as peace returned, be only too many persons and too many influences engaged in the task of inducing the public to forget.

To the war and the lessons that it taught, especially to its exposure of the defects of the existing army system, the greater part of the book was devoted.

The arguments that he used in 1900 were precisely those which, when in office, he steadily urged upon his colleagues and upon Parliament. A brief summary of what he most desired to bring home to his fellow-countrymen in 1900 may be compared with the principles that he afterwards tried to enforce, and to which he remained constant to the last day of his life.

The early lessons of the war to which he drew attention in *The War Office, the Army, and the Empire* may be thus very briefly summarised :—

"1. *No sufficient provision had been made by either Service for the wants of the other, and no combined plan of operation for the defence of the Empire had been worked out.*

It is true that the navy co-operated with the army, much to the advantage of the latter, but no one can pretend that the despatch of

naval guns to Ladysmith at the last moment, and the robbing of the ships of their complements in order to add to the number of the infantry on shore, was part of any combined plan of operations for the defence of the Empire. Still less can it with any reason be suggested that 7000 men were withdrawn from India, and that every one of the colonial garrisons, Aden, Malta, Gibraltar, Mauritius, and Halifax, not to speak of Cyprus and Egypt, was deprived of its troops in pursuance of any organised plan for the defence of the Empire. There could have been no such plan, for it stands to reason that in any war, except the particular one in which we happen to have been engaged, such transfers could only be described as criminal folly.

In a war with any European Power, so far from being able to take 7000 men from the garrison of India, we should be compelled at the outset to despatch 20,000 men to that country, not to reinforce the garrison, but simply to bring it up to war strength. In the same way, the Colonial garrisons would have required troops from home, and it would have been out of the question to look to them to supply reinforcements.

Nor does it require any special knowledge to perceive that in any war, other than one with a small inland Power, such as the Transvaal, the withdrawal of the crews of the sea-going ships would have been a step that would have called for the impeachment of the First Lord of the Admiralty who sanctioned it.

The present war, therefore, has taught us that we have made no sufficient provision for the co-operation of the two Services, and that we have as yet no plan for the defence of the Empire in any given contingency.

2. The war has taught us beyond doubt that—*Our military organisation is not suited to the needs of the nation, and that when put to the test it is bound to fail in doing those things which may reasonably be demanded of it.* The proof of this is at this moment before our eyes. We have become engaged in a war with two small African states. In order to carry it to a successful conclusion we have had to utilise every man of our available army, and to call into existence an irregular or supplementary force of no less than 60,000 men, who have all been raised, or made available, since the war began, and whose services were neither contemplated nor reckoned on in any scheme made by the War Office. For the purposes of bringing the war in Africa to a conclusion the force thus raised appears to be adequate. But at home what do we see? We see absolute chaos. We see nearly 400,000 men all ready to serve, but without organisation, without equipment, without even the weapons necessary to enable them to take the field.

3. Another lesson the war has taught us. It has taught us that *we cannot despatch any efficient body of troops from this country in an emergency without either destroying the whole regimental system at home or calling up the reserves.* It is sufficient here to point out that when our troops were fighting for their lives against a superior enemy in Natal it was not found possible to despatch one single complete battalion for their relief from the entire establishment of 108,000 men maintained in the United Kingdom. In view of the fact that sudden

emergencies are the rule and not the exception in the history of this country, it is obvious that the lesson which has just been referred to is one which we ought to lay to heart. We ought to make up our minds that in the future there shall always be a certain force of all arms instantly available for despatch in any emergency.

4. We have relied greatly on the reserves, and have been justified in doing so. But the war has taught us, what indeed every one who had really studied the question knew before, that *our reserve was, and is, a reserve in name only, and that when war came we should have to use up the whole of the army reserve, not to supplement the regular army, but to fill up the places of incompetent men, for whose upkeep the country paid, but whose services it did not receive in time of war.* It is enough here to point out that when the whole army had been mobilised, 80,000 men of the First Class Army Reserve were found to have taken the places of 100,000 incompetent soldiers; in other words, that we had returned to the precise position which the country occupied in the Crimean War, when we had a first line of undoubted excellence, and behind it nothing but a crowd of unorganised and incompetent recruits.

5. The war has also taught us what, indeed, everybody who had ever given any consideration to War Office problems at all, knew perfectly well, namely, that *in maintaining a large force of militia and volunteers at home, without any of the organisation or equipment necessary to transform a crowd into an army, the War Office was squandering public money, trifling with the nation, and exposing the country to the gravest dangers.* Every year the absurdity of our arrangements was pointed out by all sorts and conditions of men, by experienced soldiers, by militia and volunteer officers, and by Members of Parliament. Every year with perfect regularity the doubters were assured that all was well and that their alarms were groundless. Directly the war came the inevitable happened. It instantly became evident that the militia and volunteers, as they existed, and as the War Office had chosen to make them, were not available for war purposes. In consequence, all sorts of hasty schemes are now being prepared in order to do in a hurry what ought to have been done at leisure. Guns are being made by the hundred, the volunteers are to receive special training, the militia—wonder of wonders!—are to receive stores and equipment. In a word, playing at soldiers is to cease, at any rate until the public ceases to be troublesome.

6. *That the supply of artillery, both horse and field, was totally inadequate, and that the guns for both these branches, and also those assigned to the garrison artillery, were insufficient in numbers, and in some important respects unsatisfactory in quality.*

7. *That the absence of any proper field training of officers at home would be certain to lead to disaster in war.*

8. *That the absence of any organised staff during peace time, would prove a grave disadvantage in war.*

9. And, lastly, that *the War Office would be compelled, under the stress of war, to attempt to do in the face of the enemy those things which it had refused to do in time of peace, and which it had declared to be unnecessary or undesirable.*

In the small compass of this book only a fringe of the question could be touched upon. He wished to show that the Empire was in great need of a better organised defensive system, and that, so far, little had been done to organise its resources upon any reasonable basis for the purposes of defence. And it was not in the Army alone, he pleaded, that a radical change in our method is necessary. He believed that the need was equally great for a more modern organisation of the business arrangements and the government of the Empire.

“Unless we do, as a nation, take some steps to put our house in order we shall suffer probably as we never suffered before. Fifty years ago Europe was run on feudal lines, and Great Britain was just inventing the free-trade, go-as-you-please system which, for a time, achieved such success. The system was then as far ahead of the Continental one as the Brown Bess was ahead of the arquebus, and for a time we left all competitors far behind us. Then came the turn of the Continental nations; they, too, changed their old system for a new one, but, starting later than we did, they took a better road. They began to organise themselves on a scientific basis, and the result is that they are rapidly leaving behind a nation like our own which has no scientific organisation at all. They in their turn will soon be as much in advance of us as the magazine rifle is in advance of Brown Bess. Until we realise the necessity of scientific organisation, until we accept Lord Rosebery’s advice to organise the Empire on a business footing, the danger which threatens us will remain and will daily increase.”

CHAPTER IX

“ Half her land was dead with drouth,
Half was red with battle :
She was fenced with fire and sword,
Plague on pestilence outpoured.
True, ah true, and over true,
That is why we love her.
For she is South Africa,
She is our South Africa—Africa all over.”

RUDYARD KIPLING.

South Africa during the war—The Land Settlement Commission—A
South African journey—A telegram from Lord Salisbury.

IN the spring of 1900 a letter reached Oakeley from Major Shute of the Coldstream Guards, then serving in South Africa, suggesting that it would be well if some steps could be taken to render possible the settlement in South Africa of soldiers whose term of service was about to expire, or of volunteers, yeomen, and others who desired to remain in the country after the war should be over. How far off we were from the end of the war is now a matter of history, but it was certainly not known or guessed in May 1900.

Other letters on the same subject came to him. Many men would be willing, it was said, to remain in the country and to make it their home if fair terms could be arranged beforehand. He summarised some of these letters in a letter to the *Times*, quoting Major Shute's recommendations, and he communicated the suggestions made by his correspondents to the Colonial Office. It was becoming daily more apparent that, among the many problems that would have to be faced whenever the war ended, there were few questions of greater importance than the possible development of British colonisation in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony, and it seemed likely that many of the difficulties—military, social, and political—that would confront the Government, would

lose much of their gravity if a considerable addition could be made to the number of men of British blood settled upon the land in South Africa.

That the difficulties in the way were many and great, Oakeley saw very clearly. Even the men who belonged to the class most adapted to a settler's life would at first have practically no knowledge of the peculiarities and difficulties of South African farming. No settlement would be possible without carefully planned irrigation schemes, carried on either by the Government or by private Companies working on a larger scale than had hitherto been attempted. It seemed possible that the best training school for settlers would prove to be the Mounted Police Force, which would certainly be required to maintain order, and that an option of settling on the land might be given at the end of a man's police service. Mr. Wyndham stated in the House of Commons in July that the War Office considered it likely that some 15,000 men would wish to settle in South Africa; of these a certain number might be absorbed in ordinary civil employment, and a considerable number would be taken into the military police force.

Early in August it was decided by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to send out a Commission to enquire into the whole question of settlement in South Africa; and Oakeley was asked by Mr. Chamberlain to go out as its chairman. He was to be joined there by two other members, one to be a soldier, and the other to be chosen on account of special knowledge of the conditions of South African farming. Time was considered to be of importance, and Oakeley was instructed to go out without any unnecessary delay. I was allowed to accompany him, and in little more than three weeks' time we were ready to start. Mr. Arthur Loring, who had been Mr. Forster's private secretary, and secretary to the Imperial Federation League, came out with Oakeley in the capacity of secretary to the Commission.

We knew, at this time, that in all probability a General Election would take place in the autumn, and our absence at such a time was naturally a matter of somewhat serious consideration. The people of Belfast were so loyal, how-

ever, and so earnest that their Member should be free to undertake any Imperial service that he should be called upon to do, that they insisted that he should dismiss this anxiety from his mind, and that his election should be left for his constituents to manage for him. They carried out their promise most effectually, and watched over his interests so well that the idea of contesting the seat was abandoned by the Nationalists, and in October we had the great satisfaction of receiving by cable the good news that his return had been unopposed. Thoughts of Belfast being much in my mind, I remember how puzzled I was when, on landing at Cape Town, after the long journey in the *Carisbrooke Castle*, a telegram was handed to us containing the message—"Cordially welcome you to South Africa.—Roberts, Belfast," and how Oakeley laughed when, thinking over the names of his constituents and committee in Belfast, I asked him, "But who is Roberts?" It sounded, no doubt, like Lord Coleridge's famous question; but there were plenty of people besides myself who had not, before September 1900, realised the existence of the South African Belfast, where Lord Roberts and his army had halted in the course of their march to Pretoria.

The work of the Commission began almost immediately in Cape Town, where Mr. Southey, the second member of the Commission, joined us. His wide knowledge of farming and irrigation in the colony gave him an experience and a standing that were of the greatest value.

The military member, Brigadier-General Plumer, whose help Lord Roberts promised, would have been equally valuable. He telegraphed expressing his willingness to join as soon as he could be set free; but, owing to the continuance of severe fighting in the Transvaal, and to the fact that General Plumer was constantly engaged in active operations, it was found impossible to spare him from the front.

The Commission sat at first in Cape Town and carried on its work there for some weeks. Sir Alfred Milner gave his active help and sympathy, and the evidence of Ministers in the Cape Government and of many experts, both on the agricultural and on the military side of the question, was

heard. Later, when the Commission travelled to the north, they found that much of their work had to be prosecuted under very unfavourable circumstances, owing to the prolongation of the war and the recrudescence of active hostilities in districts which appeared to be pacified at the time when the Commission was appointed. There was not a little truth in the comment that Oakeley made in one of his letters written in September—"The 'annexation' of the Transvaal at this moment seems to me rather like 'annexing' a Bengal tiger that is still at large in the jungle."

Although the Commissioners were able to visit Pretoria, Johannesburg, Bloemfontein, Maseru and some other centres, many districts to which they had intended to go, were forbidden them on account of the active hostilities still in progress, and there interfered with a great part of the long tour of inspection which would have been made in the Transvaal and Orange River Colony. Before leaving Cape Colony they paid special visits to different parts of the country, to see the fruit farms, plantations and irrigation works in which capital and intelligence had been applied to the problems of cultivation, and which furnished examples of what could be accomplished in these directions. Amongst other places in the Colony, they visited the George and Knysna districts for the purpose of inspecting the large tracts of land that belong to the Cape Government.

This journey was one of great interest, taking us due east across the southern end of Africa. The railway brought us as far as the edge of the Karroo and we left the train at Prince Albert Road, and made the rest of the journey in Cape carts, first crossing the desolate plain of the Karroo where no grass or trees grow, and only the low mimosa bush with its great white thorns flourishes among the stones.

The various stages were so arranged that farms could be visited and Government land inspected. From Prince Albert we went over the mountain passes of the Zwartberg, across forty miles of veldt, through weird-looking forests of prickly-pear trees, their grim aspect relieved by their brilliant cups of orange flowers, to the little town of Oudtshoorn lying in a rich valley given up to the cultivation of orange gardens

and ostrich farms. Beyond Oudtshoorn, there was another long day's journey across bare veldt, swept with fierce dust storms, where on one stony hillside we watched a party of baboons climbing. Then down the Montagu pass to the plains and to the town of George. The descent is one of the loveliest things imaginable. You leave a bleak and stony wilderness behind and make a sudden plunge into the tropics. On the steep rocky cliffs of the pass, great tree ferns grow, and in the little clefts and gullies there hang masses of maidenhair and climbing ferns. Trees of eucalyptus and oak make a thick shade, and when I left the cart to gather flowers, I came back with my arms full of pelargoniums, feathery sprays of a Michaelmas daisy, and spikes of scarlet salvia, with great ferns. George, with its wide, tree-shaded streets and pretty houses, has an air of prosperity which is rare in South Africa, and looked to us like a peaceful sleepy English south-country town. Beyond George the virgin forest stretches in a thick belt some eighty miles long and twelve miles broad, though broken by open veldt here and there. The forests are Government property, and the elephants that still live in them are carefully and strictly preserved. They are rarely seen except by the forest keepers, nor did we see the forest monkeys that we were told abounded. The road through the forest passes through kloofs, at the bottom of which a river of black peaty water stands in pools. The road winds up the side of steep ravines and at every turn becomes more beautiful. All the trees are evergreen, giant yellow-wood trees towering amongst them. A strange greyness pervades everything, for from nearly every bough there hang masses of beard-like lichen, trailing down in long strands of whitish-grey, giving it a weird and ghostlike effect. Great creepers like bare twisted ropes hang from the summit of the trees; these are "baboon ropes" or lianas, and other prettier creepers cover and clothe the trees, and make a dense and impenetrable tropical-looking undergrowth.

Two days later found us driving down the long valley of the Knysna river, and on to Knysna village itself, where Government land, and farming and forestry had to be seen. On the way we found rich treasures of new flowers, for even

the veldt was enjoying its short blossoming time, and in places it was carpeted with tiny iris, and in other places with many kinds of heaths, proteas, orchis, watsonias, Cape blue-bells and africandas, in great variety and profusion.

Knysna harbour ought to be the best harbour and finest anchorage along this coast, but a small bar at its mouth seals it up and renders it useless. The Police Magistrate took us out in a boat to the Knysna Heads where the estuary and harbour meet the Indian Ocean. The boat was manned by little coloured convicts, a friendly conversation going on all the time between our host and the crew, whilst a constable sat in the bows, revolver in hand. Much of the ordinary labour on the farms and gardens is done by the convicts, and they seemed to be leading both a happier and a more useful life than if they were shut up within prison walls.

From Knysna two long days of driving brought us down to Mossel Bay, and to the s.s. *Norman*, in which we made the journey back to Cape Town. We were met by telegrams from Pretoria from Lord Roberts, desiring Oakeley to go north and to join him as soon as possible. Sir Alfred Milner was already on his way to Pretoria. The work of the Commission in Cape Colony was now completed; Mr. Rhodes met the Commissioners in Cape Town on their arrival, and gave the evidence that he desired to lay before them. Mr. Rhodes's views on land settlement in the Transvaal were explained in his evidence, and were set out more fully in a memorandum which he now sent privately to Oakeley, which was afterwards published, to which he refers in the following letter, written in November 1901.

"DEAR MR. FORSTER—I received your Land Report here and suggestions for settlement in South Africa.

"The longer the war goes on, and the dogged animosity of the Dutch towards our rule is made so clear, the greater the necessity arises for future permanent peace, of a settlement of our people on the land mixed with the Dutch.

"I note you have published my Minute to the Governor on *Irrigation Settlements*, but not the one to yourself on *Occupation of Dry Farms*. At the time, I think I asked

you to consider it confidential, but the question is becoming so serious that any personal trouble must be waived if a public perusal of my ideas would help English thought in the right direction.

"The fault of the Irrigation Colonies is that they must take considerable time to form, and therefore the letter to yourself contains, I think, the most satisfactory suggestion.

"I dread not the war, but the return of all the prisoners to the land, with their feelings embittered against us and with mistaken views. The only chance is to mix our people with them on the land, and this necessitates the immediate settlement of our people on the land of the Transvaal to mix with the returning prisoners. I have no fear of there being sufficient good land in the market. I think, therefore, to help the cause, it would be well to publish my letter to you.

"I write to ask if you thought it would be better to issue it as an extra Appendix to your Part II. *Documents Appendices*. Otherwise, I could send it to one of the papers, but I thought I would write you first. I think it would help; and to my mind, for permanent peace in Africa, it is the only solution.

"Kindly reply to me at the Savoy Hotel, Cairo.—Yours truly,
C. J. RHODES."

I too went to see Mr. Rhodes before I left South Africa. "Your husband and I have met," he told me, "and we got on together very well." "Do you know, Mr. Rhodes," I said, "that he has said strong things about you—bitter things, sometimes?" "Yes," he said very slowly, "I believe that I have read all that he has said and written . . . but we have met . . . and I liked him"—this with emphasis—then a pause—"and I believe he liked *me*."

After a little he began to talk about Oxford, and I quoted some of those lines of Matthew Arnold's that haunt one's memory.

"Beautiful city—so venerable, so lovely, so unravaged by the fierce intellectual life of our century, so serene! . . . Adorable dreamer . . . Home of lost causes, and forsaken

beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!" He made me go on to the end, his face lightening a little as he spoke of Oxford. He talked very openly and freely, but very sadly, telling me of his illness and suffering. He looked very ill and desolate, I thought; but when he began to speak of the changes and chances of his life, his talk became extraordinarily dramatic, and seemed singularly expressive of his intense vital energy.

Before I left Cape Town he told me more about his views on Land Settlement and irrigation, and asked me to note down the ideas that he had been explaining, so that Oakeley might be fully in possession of them.

He embodied these suggestions somewhat later in a memorandum which he sent to Oakeley, and which is referred to in his letter.

As soon as Mr. Rhodes's evidence had been given to the Commission, they were ready to leave Cape Town; I said good-bye to them and returned home to England, and the Commission with Major Shute, who had joined them, started on the slow journey northwards to Bloemfontein and Pretoria, broken by many halts, and interrupted by the stern necessity of "tying up" for the night and only travelling by daylight. Passages from Oakeley's daily letters to me will tell the story of their further experiences in his own words.

"Train between Bloemfontein and Kroonstadt.

"The country we have been going through to-day is a succession of very wide plains, covered with more or less burnt grass, and with a few isolated hills all round the horizon. At every station there is a camp, and a more or less elaborate entrenchment. I am now looking out on to an artillery encampment, the first we have come across. (Name of the place Wet River, population nil, products nil, attractions nil.) In this river there is actually a certain flow of muddy water, as there was also in the Modder, which we crossed shortly after leaving Bloemfontein. Three spans of the big girder bridge at Wet River were blown up by the Boers. We crossed on the newly finished wooden trestles. The shattered girders lie by the side.

"The boys would be interested to see the wonderful 'mirages' over the plains. Again and again I see great lakes, sometimes the sea. All the details are quite plain, and I can even see the stakes sticking up in the shallow water, the deep channels farther out; the wooded islands in the distance. Like everything else in this country, these delights are all a sham and a disappointment. One thing is real though, and that is the meercats, of which we see scores scampering over the dry ground near the railway. They look like squirrels with their long bushy tails. I should rather like to bring one home. We have been travelling all day over the line of Roberts's advance on Pretoria. There was not much fighting, you will remember; but there was some, as the occasional well-tended graves by the side of the railway serve to remind us.

"*P.S.*—Landscape just now animated by 1 dead cow, 1 do. sheep, 1 tin can, empty."

"PRETORIA, 3rd October.

"By six o'clock we had reached Elandsfontein, the junction for Johannesburg. Here we were in the very middle of the Rand, and the big iron buildings at the mines were all lit up like Lancashire factories. The station was busy, a train of trucks was taking the Essex Regiment down south. They are really marvellous fellows these 'Tommies.' They had come through a three days' journey from Krokodils Poort; they were going on they knew not whither. They were dusty, they were tired, and they had little to eat, and nothing but bad water to drink. They were in open trucks, and were sitting and lying on the floor. The day before they had all got a thorough ducking, and yet they were all as cheerful and good-tempered as men could be. I was unwise enough to make some compassionate remark about the 'pleasures' of travelling in a truck. I found I had made a great mistake. This was real luxury; they had been marching for many miles, the railway travelling was a real treat, and the trucks were fine. Truly, Tommy is a wonderful, and in his way, a very noble person.

"To-day, Wednesday, I have paid two interesting visits, the first to Lord Kitchener and second to Lord Roberts.

Lord Kitchener received me in the most friendly way, and his manner was very civil and agreeable. He talked at length with me about the work of the Commission. I told him my enquiry had led to my obtaining much information about soldiers requiring occupation otherwise than on the land, and I thought that the information, if tabulated, would be of considerable use to the military. He agreed, and asked me to furnish it to him, and I shall see him again.

"I then called by appointment on the Chief. He was, as always, most kindly and friendly. He too agreed that my information would help the soldiers, and asked me to prepare it. He is very strong as to the necessity for settlement, thinks great sacrifices should be made to obtain it. He fully saw my point about the reservists. He thinks he has now practically got the authorities to sanction the discharge of reserve men here, free from liability save for South Africa, and hopes they may extend the same indulgence to men actually serving with the colours, but near the end of the term. He declares he can let me have a definite statement this afternoon. I trust he may.

"I was pleased when he asked me about my Army articles. He had seen two or three of them which General Hamilton had; he particularly wished to see the whole set. I have sent him the first seven which I had with me. He will get the book in Cape Town."

"October 26th.

"We had a pleasant ride to Fort K——, one of the Boer fortifications at the top of a hill about five miles from the town. From the top of a hill we had a splendid view of Pretoria and the country round. The gunner in charge of the fort pointed out all the interesting features of the landscape, the positions of the British and Boer guns, the line of the British advance, and of the Boer retreat; the pass through which the Delagoa Bay line and the Pietersburg line respectively pass.

"Seen from a distance Pretoria looks well. There are shady trees in the streets which give the place a green and

gentle appearance ; the hills are well shaped, and blend into one another ; and altogether the country looks more civilised and natural than anything we have seen since leaving Cape Town.

" I can't say, however, that life in the town is very full of charm. No one is allowed in the streets after dark without a pass, the carriages all go home then, and everything is as quiet as the grave. The living is frankly vile, the meat barely eatable, the drink only bad whisky and indifferent tea. A wretched lunch at the Club costs five shillings. Oranges, when you can get them, are a shilling apiece ; the Cape papers come only once a week, and in fact everything is in a very uncomfortable condition.

" Yesterday, Thursday, was the day of the ceremony. I received a card which entitled me to view it from the balcony of the Government buildings, so that I saw everything very well. The function began at 4 o'clock. The scene was the Public Square, which was bordered with troops, and by a moderately sized crowd of soldiers and civilians. The proceedings were opened by the entry of Lord Roberts and his staff to the sound of 'God Save the Queen,' the Royal Standard was hoisted, and the troops presented arms. Then General Maxwell, Governor of the town, rode into the middle of the Square, and seated on his horse read out the Annexation Proclamation. I hope that it is not only those who heard it who will be bound by it, for I don't believe any one in the Square had the slightest idea of what the gallant General was talking about.

" When we had annexed the country, and given three cheers for the Queen (very good cheers too) the presentation of Victoria Crosses and other Decorations to ten favoured recipients took place. There was not much pomp about the business. The ten khaki-coated heroes stood up before a most unmistakable kitchen table, partly covered, but by no means concealed, by a Union Jack. Then each man in turn walked up to Lord Roberts, who, seated on his horse, pinned on the Decoration, and shook hands with the 'decoré.' After that the ten had to clear out of the way as fast as they could, and they accordingly made their way back across the Square so to speak 'promiscuously.' It was all very right

and genuine no doubt, but as a ceremony and spectacle the thing was very ineffective.

"Then came the March Past. This was fine and stirring. I have never seen troops under similar circumstances, and the sight of these war-hardened men in their discoloured uniforms swinging past their Chief was moving enough I assure you. It was specially moving to those who knew something of each regiment, its past history and its recent fortunes. Two battalions had been brought into Pretoria specially for the occasion, these were a battalion of the Gordon Highlanders, and another of the 60th Rifles. Lord Roberts told me he had selected them because they had had the heaviest losses. Out of 701 of the Rifles—so the Chief told me—600 were Reservists. The two battalions of the Gordons have lost 60 officers killed and wounded during the war. In the battalion which was present there were only four of the original officers. That is a fine but sad record."

"The Royal Artillery led the March. They were as good, as workmanlike, and almost as regular in their movements as I have seen them at home. The guns as well as the men were of course all dirt-coloured. Among them was a big 5-inch gun drawn by a team of 20 oxen. The Composite Regiment—the Household Cavalry that is—looked well; but, alas, their beautiful black horses, after doing very well, were cut off by the starvation march on Bloemfontein, and only two of the original number remain.

"The Guards were represented by the Grenadiers and Coldstreams, and splendid they looked. I expect I should be right in saying that taking them as they are now, they have no equals among the infantry of the world. They are as smart in movement and drill as they are at home. This they owe to their regimental pride, to their excellent N.C.O.s, and to their strict discipline. They have indulged in a little vanity of dress; for the Grenadiers—a white plume in their soft broad-brimmed hat, and the Coldstreams a red one. Altogether, I think the Coldstream was the finest battalion on the ground, and the Guard of Honour furnished by them was splendid.

"The Guards were followed by the Gordons, the 60th, the Canadians, the Volunteers, the Seaforths, and by companies

from several other battalions including the Leicester, Yorkshire, Yorkshire Light Infantry, Norfolk, Hampshire, and last but not least the Wiltshire. I don't know whether the whole of this poor dear battalion is here, but I am certainly going to hunt up what there is, and try and find a Wroughton man.

"It is sad in one way to see how a plume, a snap of colour, or any other distinction draws a cheer from the crowd. It can't be helped, of course, but it must dishearten battalions which have borne the burden of the day to pass unnoticed and unacclaimed because they have no mark to distinguish them. Certainly a little style in uniform is a great gain. The Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in their kilts with khaki aprons, their slouched hats with a big white feather in the side, and their pipes wailing and skirling in front of them, made a splendid show. They looked like a regiment of Dugald Dalgetty's time. Of course everybody cheered them."

"PRETORIA, *October 28th.*

"I have just said good-bye to the Lytteltons. . . . How I wish our Commission had come to such a satisfactory stage in its labours as the Concessions Committee has. But it is not easy to see how we are to make progress. Honestly, I cannot see that I am to blame for this. I set to work, as you know, the day after I arrived. To this day I have never had a sight of my military colleague. He is at the present moment fighting with Paget about thirty miles to the north of this place, and Lord Roberts tells me he cannot possibly now be spared. A very right and proper decision, but not a convenient one for the Commission. Then again, we are charged to report upon the quality of land in various parts of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, and to ascertain the price at which it is to be obtained. But it is ill selling the bear's skin until the bear has been caught—and the bear is not caught. Far from it. Every day brings accounts of fighting in every direction. . . .

"I told Lord Roberts how matters stood when I saw him last Wednesday. He told me that if I brought him a list of the places we ought to visit, he would mark on it those

places to which we could safely proceed. . . . I prepared a list immediately. . . . In the meanwhile I am doing what I can in the way of taking such evidence as is available here, but my principal work is closed to me. Of course, if I see no prospect of getting on, I shall throw the thing up, make my report as best I can with the material I have, and come home, but I am very loth indeed to do this, and shall not give up or give in while there is a chance of being able to carry out my whole mission."

"1st November.

"I have received delightful letters from you; I fear greatly, however, that a long letter from you describing your visit to Grootshuur and your talks with Rhodes must have gone astray. The letters which have reached me were eight days on the road, and we know that the Boers got hold of the mail-bags last week and burned their contents. Bad luck to them!

"I am not and cannot be satisfied with the progress of my work. It is not my fault that more cannot be accomplished, but the unpleasant fact remains all the same. As you know, it is part of our business to inspect and report upon land in various parts of this country; but I have now received from Lord Roberts the definite statement that we can be allowed to go nowhere save to the railway stations at Middelburg and Standerton. As, therefore, I am not prepared to spend the rest of my natural life in South Africa, I must alter my programme to suit the situation. Our present plan is to go to Johannesburg on Friday to see the valuable market gardens in the neighbourhood, and on Sunday to Bloemfontein. We shall then drive across the corner of the Orange River Colony to Maseru in Basuto Land, where Sir Godfrey Lagden will put us in the way of obtaining all the information that we require respecting the land of the 'Conquered Territory.' My idea is to proceed from Maseru to Middelburg—and if time permits to return to Cape Town *via* Natal.

"It is not easy to make plans in advance with any certainty as to being able to carry them out, but if this programme proves to be workable we might possibly be back about the 23rd December. But don't count on this.

Much as I long to be back, I shall not go away from this country as long as I think I can serve the cause of the Mission by stopping. . . . I have not yet heard from home, and unless and until I have some idea as to what the Government intend as to purchase, pre-emption, or confiscation, I am and shall remain in a difficult position. I am glad to say I have been able to get through one piece of work which I think will be of real use. I have, at Lord Roberts's request, made out a careful report for presentation to Lord Kitchener showing the total number of Government posts likely to be available for Reservists. When he gets this (and I am sending it in to-day) he will be able to telegraph direct to the W.O. that so many men can be employed, and to ask whether they will sanction the discharge of that number. I have suggested to Milner that I should make an interim report dealing with the employment of men otherwise than on the land. This I am in a position to do if he approves."

"JOHANNESBURG, *November 4th.*

". . . The first part of the rainy season has begun in earnest. Thirty-six hours' continuous downpour turned all the red dust into red mud, and made the so-called roads into swamps. The veldt is beginning to look green again, and the stream beds, so long dry, are bringing down a fair amount of water. . . . I lunched with Lord Kitchener the day we came away. He was very friendly, and talked freely with me about Army matters generally. He, like most other soldiers, takes the lowest view of our W.O. organisation, and spoke to me of the horror with which he first discovered the kind of machine he was expected to work with in South Africa, coming to it as he did after such a long experience of the Egyptian Army which he did so much to create; and the organisation of which was of course just what he wished it to be. He also spoke strongly of the need for a heavy long range field-gun and for a better rifle than the Lee-Metford. . . .

"I have just heard of some of the new appointments—Lansdowne to the F.O., Selborne to the Admiralty! *Good!*"

"Train between Rhenoster Kop and Kroonstadt,
November 8th.

"... Our days at Vereenigen were busy and well spent. . . . We left Vereenigen yesterday, finding our own saloon waiting for us on the siding. While we were waiting I found my way to a little shanty occupied by several N.C.O.'s of that very fine Battalion, the 'Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers,' the old Fighting Fifth. They were a splendid set of men, and I was pleased to learn how much they valued the restoration of their 'gosling green' facings; a change for which I worked so hard.

"It is only two or three miles from Vereenigen which is in the Transvaal, to Viljoen's Drift which is in the Orange River Colony; the great bridge over the Vaal connects the two places. The restoration of this bridge is a great feather in the cap of our engineers. The bridge was composed of immense girder spans, supported on tall stone columns. The Boers had blown up one of the spans, and with the appliances available this could not be replaced. But our Engineers were equal to the situation. They slid the unbroken span along till it filled up the blank space. Then it was comparatively easy to build out a wooden structure from the bank to complete the length, and so the trick was done.

"It was while the train was wasting time at Viljoen's Drift that I was met by a man on the platform with a telegram in his hand, and wanting to know if I could tell him where Mr. Arnold-Forster was. I owned up and took the telegram. I opened it without any interest or anticipation, thinking it was a message from Bloemfontein in reply to our enquiries about transport. You know by this time what it was about. You will believe that I was surprised and pleased when I read this—

'Clear the line—Army Telegraphs, Johannesburg, 6.10 P.M.—recd. 6.44 P.M. Arnold-Forster, Esq., Viljoen's Drift. 5th Nov. H. 1054. Following received for you through Cape Town: begins—"Will you undertake office of Secretary to Admiralty representing the Department in the House of Commons? Selborne is your Chief. Salisbury"—ends. You can reply through A.A.G. Army, Capetown, or me, as you like, but I should be glad to know this has reached you.—LORD KITCHENER.'

"I have written another letter to you about this message

and have told you how greatly it surprised me and how much it pleased me. Honestly at first I almost thought it must be a hoax, but reflection convinced me that to joke by means of the W.O. telegrams in a country under martial law was too solemn a thing to be undertaken by the most frivolous or the most malicious. Then came the reflection that the telegram was two days old, that I had sent no answer, and that in the meantime perhaps some more ready and accessible person had been offered and had accepted the post. The fear haunts me still, but I can't think they would give me up so soon, knowing how far afield I was, and that I was on Government service.

"I brought the telegram into the saloon, and told Arthur that I had good news, and that a man I was very glad to see appointed had been sent to the Admiralty. He asked who the lucky man was, and I told him that it was the Chairman of the L.S. Commission. They were very pleasant, and yesterday evening, when we were anchored for the night at a dismal little wayside station called 'Koppies,' they drank the health of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty with much goodwill. . . . At this same desolate little station we heard that a party of 80 Boers were some four miles off and that a party of mounted men with two guns were going out after them that night from the next station, Rhenoster Kop. The expedition had not returned when we passed Rhenoster at 6 o'clock this morning."

From Bloemfontein the Commission rode across country by way of Thabanchu, which is near the Basuto Land border, to Maseru, where they were kindly welcomed by Sir Godfrey Lagden, and greatly helped by his experience. From Maseru Oakeley wrote to me :—

"A message has come through from General Hunter to say that the Boers are out in force with 1100 men and 5 guns, on the road between here and Thabanchu, and that I cannot return by that route. So we have had to make up our minds to a long journey of 200 miles through Basuto Land to Aliwal North. The Boers have got hold of our mails and burnt them. There should have been at least two mails for us and all the papers which I particularly

want to see. . . . Barring the absence of news from you, things might have been much worse ; we might easily have been 'held up' ourselves, our horses, papers, and baggage taken, or have had to halt for many days in one of the out-of-the-way little military posts. . . . I have been able to make substantial progress here with the draft of the Report."

Their long journey was successfully carried out, and they reached Cape Town without further difficulty or hindrance.

The work of the Commission had been seriously interfered with by the war. Still, much valuable information had been collected, and the Report gave the summary of their conclusions on the various points which had been referred to them—on the nature and amount and prices of land available, the best methods of obtaining such land, and the irrigation that would be necessary. On the question of military settlements the Commission found itself unable to recommend the formation of "Military Settlements" as such, but drew up careful suggestions as to the encouragement and assistance to be given to men able and willing to settle upon the land, and the obligations that might be imposed by the authorities in return for assistance given. The portion of the Report, however, that gave immediate and practical results was the interim Report, which, by permission of the Secretary to the Colonies, Oakeley drew up on the employment of soldiers, otherwise than on the land. Lord Kitchener's prompt and able co-operation enabled these recommendations to be adopted and carried into effect immediately, with the consent of the War Office authorities.

Information was collected and tabulated respecting all soldiers desiring to remain in the country as Government servants—in the police, in the postal service, in Government offices, on the railways, and in private occupations and trades. The Bureaux of Information suggested in this Report were adopted by Lord Kitchener, and were found to work successfully by giving information to soldier settlers as to the possibilities that were open to them, and the districts in which they could hope to exercise their trades or professions ;

whilst they gave to employers the means of ascertaining whether men of the stamp they required were available.

Oakeley reached Cape Town in time to sail for home by the *Briton*, and on his arrival in England immediately entered upon his new duties and work at the Admiralty.

CHAPTER X

“Mother of ships whose might,
England, my England,
Is the fierce old sea’s delight,
England, my own.”

W. E. HENLEY.

Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty—Lord Selborne and his Board—The Death of Queen Victoria—Navy Estimates, 1901—Letters.

THE spirit in which Oakeley entered upon his new work is expressed better than it could be by any words of mine in the letter which follows—a letter written to me when he had just received the news of his appointment:—

“Train between Kroonstadt and Bloemfontein, O.R.C.,
8th November 1900.

“MY DARLING—I wonder if I am right in thinking of you this day as setting foot once more in England? If wind and sea have treated you as I would have them do, you will be at Southampton at this very hour. At the worst, you will be well within ‘soundings,’ and the Lizard will be astern of you. Long before this reaches you, you will, I trust, be at home and happy with the boys to look after you. . . . You will have heard my good news too; that is to say if, after all, my good news does not turn out to be too good to be true, and if nothing interferes to illustrate the ancient proverb of ‘the slip betwixt cup and lip.’ Truly, it was a wonderful surprise to me to be greeted at a wayside station in this distant land by a telegram from the Prime Minister offering me, without conditions, the one post in the administration of the country which I should most desire to occupy, and the one, moreover, which seemed to me twenty-four hours ago more hopelessly out of my reach than any other.

But I need not tell you, dear one, that twenty-four hours ago one post seemed just as far out of my reach as another. I can say with absolute sincerity that not only have I never sought office, or laid myself out to obtain it, but I have never regarded it as in any way my due, and I have never for one moment expected to obtain it. Others will not believe this, but you know that it is literally and absolutely true. I know it to be so. I have always felt that neither what I did, nor the way I did it, could possibly commend me to those who had the making of Governments. My manner I regretted often, but it is a thing hard to change. My work as a critic and a teacher I thought was good work. I was proud to do it, and to win some measure of success in it; but I have always thought it was the kind of work which would close doors to me and not open them. I must say that all these reflections make the offer which has now come to me the more welcome. Could there be a pleasanter post for me than Parliamentary Secretary to the Admiralty? to be my own chief in the House of Commons, with a chief whom I personally greatly like, and with whom I know I can work, in the House of Lords. But indeed I think I can work with all the Admiralty officials, naval and civil. Most of them I already know well; all those I know I like. Moreover, I start well equipped in one respect. Of my own knowledge of naval things I think little; it will make work easier perhaps, it will certainly make it pleasanter and more interesting. But I don't put its value higher than that. But one qualification I possess which I do value. I start with a knowledge of naval men, a most profound respect for their integrity and ability, and with a regard almost amounting to affection for the Service and its traditions. How different might the situation have been had I been selected for another office. To whom I owe this promotion, who put such an idea into Lord Salisbury's head, I cannot imagine.

"One regret there is, namely, that my beloved mother did not live to see this appointment bestowed on me. It would have given her infinite pleasure. She loved the Navy like the good Englishwoman she was, and she would have rejoiced to see me in a post so honourable in itself, so con-

genial to me, and so little calculated to lead me into strife or contention. While the loss of her love, sympathy, and guidance is bitter in this, as in every other undertaking of my life, I have a consolation which makes me very happy. I believe there is no post in the public service which your father would more gladly see his son-in-law occupy than that which has been offered to me. His own interest in the Navy has never flagged ; and moreover, he will, I am certain, rejoice over my being set to work with such gentlemen as the naval officers are, and occupied with matters about which he and I are so sure to be in agreement. I feel so strongly that the appointment will give him pleasure that I shall write to him directly on that assumption. If, and with only a flimsy telegram to hang my speculations on, I must preface all I say with an if, if, I say, all goes smoothly, and I return safely home to find my new work waiting for me, we shall have many pleasant things to think of and talk over."

It was indeed literally and exactly true that never during the course of his Parliamentary life did he think of or expect to obtain office.

He was deeply convinced that, for a man not rich in worldly goods, political life could be lived happily with dignity and freedom only if he framed his life in entire independence of all such thoughts. "It would unconsciously influence our lives and our judgment," he said to me once ; "one's independence of thought would suffer, and I would rather that you should never dwell on it, never talk of it, never, if possible, even *want* office for me."

In a letter that I wrote to him on my journey home from South Africa on the *Dunvegan Castle*, I find this brief account of one of many such talks that I had with Sir Redvers Buller. The General was depressed and often gloomy, and, to divert his mind from the many anxieties that were pressing upon him, "I suggested that he and I should make up the ideal Cabinet and the Government of our choice. With pencil and paper we have been creating rival Governments, and criticising and destroying each other's

paper creations.¹ He looked up at me from this Government-making play and said, 'I wish A.-F. would be in this Government; he ought to be, but I tell you he is a long sight too honest for Governments. He won't ask for anything for himself, will he? He ought to be in the War Office, but they would *kill* him there; he couldn't survive them.' A pause. 'The Admiralty would be the best place to put him in.' I laughed, and told the General that when he took to journalism you would take to 'looking for' or expecting office; and that when he went on to the staff of *The Times* you would perhaps be put into a Government—but he put you into his paper Government all the same."

The following letter to Mr. J. R. Thursfield was written immediately after Oakeley's arrival in England:—

"19th December 1900.

"DEAR THURSFIELD—I found many kind letters awaiting me on my return home. Most of them I believe my wife has acknowledged on my behalf, but there are two which require special and early acknowledgment from myself; one is from my old master at University, the Dean of Westminster, the other is from yourself. It was a great pleasure to me to receive your letter. You know quite well the value I attach to your opinion and guidance in naval matters. I imagine there is no one else in the country who has the exact combination of technical knowledge and literary faculty that you possess.

"I am under no illusions about my new post. The work will be very hard and very responsible, and indeed almost too much for me. The want of any official experience will greatly add to my difficulties. But I start with one real qualification, and that is a most sincere regard and esteem for the naval officers, and an immense belief in their practical good sense and power of getting things done. I imagine that as a secretary and a subordinate I shall really have very little initiative, and that my duty will be to state as lucidly as I can the views of others. But were it otherwise I assure you that I am not in the frame of mind which

¹ (The composition of Lord Salisbury's new Government, which was actually formed at that time, was unknown to us until we landed at Southampton.)

would allow me to put my own ideas into competition with those of my colleagues. For the present I have everything to learn, for though I certainly know more about the Navy than the first man in the street, I have no knowledge comparable to that of any ordinary naval officer. My first ambition is to be of service to the Navy, and my second to assist Selborne in every possible manner, and to make his task easy, and his tenure of office at the Admiralty a success. As for you, I know you too well to suppose that you will not from time to time 'talk to me for my good.' It would be very bad for me if you did not. Only let me ask you to remember that whatever mistakes I may make, they will not be errors arising from any want of love for the Service, or respect for its traditions. I repeat that I shall probably have very little to do beyond recording other people's opinions, but as far as I have any influence, power, initiative, or authority, I hope to devote them all to one purpose, and one purpose alone, and that is to preparing the Navy for war, and enabling it to succeed when war comes.—Believe me, yours very sincerely, H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER."

Oakeley's feeling about the naval service has already been spoken of; his admiration and affection for it and for its traditions made the work of the department that he was entering the most interesting and the most congenial that could have been given to him.

The new Board of Admiralty under Lord Selborne was formed in November, and Oakeley returned from South Africa in time to take his seat on it, before the beginning of the New Year.

In January Queen Victoria's long reign ended. Oakeley was glad all his life that he too had been, "even for a short time, and in a humble capacity, a Minister of the great Queen," for his father's deep personal devotion to her had been met by the Queen with a great trust and confidence; and in the letters which she wrote to Mr. Forster week by week when he was in office, and in the sympathy which she gave to him throughout his life, she showed her confidence in his character, judgment, and loyalty.

The first official ceremony in which Oakeley was called on

to take part was that stately and most touching one, when, escorted by the ships of her Navy, the Queen's body was brought across the waters of the Solent, and taken thence by Portsmouth and London to its resting-place at Windsor.

The Board of Admiralty, which now entered upon its work, had been immediately preceded by Lord Goschen's Administration. Lord Goschen's own capacity and experience were great, and were widely recognised. The general feeling of the House of Commons was expressed in Oakeley's first speech as Secretary to the Admiralty, when he spoke of Lord Goschen's great services to the Navy, and of his record of service as of "peculiar and almost unique experience in the House. He served for eight and a half years as First Lord of the Admiralty in the House of Commons, and during every one of those years he added to his accumulated wealth of experience in regard to naval matters. I believe I am correct in saying that no civilian Minister, who has had the honour of administering the affairs of the Admiralty, more completely gained the confidence of the naval service than Lord Goschen. I believe he understood to a most remarkable degree the feelings of all those serving in the Fleet, and I believe no Minister was ever more jealous for the preservation of those privileges, and regarded more carefully those feelings."

It is easier to speak of his admiration for one who, like Lord Goschen, has passed "beyond these voices," than it is to speak of the cordial and happy relations that existed between him and the Board of which he became a member; of his relation with his chief, Lord Selborne, with the Naval Lords whom he served, and with Mr. Pretyma, then Civil Lord, whose close friendship, dating from this period of joint work at the Admiralty, was so deeply valued by Oakeley. Nine years later, Lord Selborne wrote to me of this time: "No one knows as you do how wholly his life was given for his country, and how unsullied it was with even a thought of self, or with anything untrue or mean. I know something of the truth, for never did a man have a more loyal or capable colleague than I had at the Admiralty, and I should like to express to you now the lifelong gratitude I owe to him for what he did to help me there."

The three years of work at the Admiralty were busy and happy ones. The knowledge of the Navy that he already possessed made it comparatively easy for Oakeley to acquire the general and detailed information needed by a representative of the Admiralty in the House of Commons. It helped him to avoid errors, and it gave to his expositions of estimates, and to his speeches, in the course of debates, a clearness that arose from the fact that the things about which he was speaking—the men, the ships, the guns—were concrete and actual things, personally known and familiar, and not, as they so often are to speakers in the House, merely abstract nouns, items in a Blue book or report.

In his experience as a private member he had so often found that very misleading official answers were given to questions in the House, that he resolved never to give answers which he had not written himself, or corrected and carefully considered in the light of all the information that could be supplied to him. In the Admiralty, and later at the War Office, he kept strictly to this rule. Perhaps only those who know how much easier it is to an overworked Minister to give a reply as it is supplied ready-made by his Department, can fully realise what a difference it may make if such a rule is faithfully observed. His pleasure was great when a severe critic of the Administration said in the House that Oakeley's answers to questions were always notably fair and honest.

Without dwelling too much on the details of the questions of Naval Administration that were discussed in Parliament in the years 1900-3, the main outlines may be given of the policy followed by the Board of Admiralty, the main criticism that it had to meet, and its defence. And before the close of this chapter of his life, I shall try to show briefly which were the questions that interested him most of all, and which greatly occupied his mind during his tenure of office. Towards the consideration of certain problems the whole training and bent of his mind naturally inclined him; and to them he gave much of his thought and work.

Amongst these questions were the need for a more complete organisation for war throughout the Empire, and

the necessity for the creation of a special body to whom the problem of the defence of the Empire as a whole, and the effective, scientific, and economical utilisation of its resources in time of war, should eventually be entrusted. For in the lack of co-ordination of the resources of the Empire for defence and offence, he still saw our greatest need and our greatest danger as a nation ; and he urged that the consideration of this problem was by far the most important that is entrusted to any Prime Minister or Government.

These ideas that he had long dwelt upon and advocated, were gradually becoming familiar ones, and were beginning to crystallise into shape, and to find a place, not only in the creed of students of Military and Naval history, but also in the beliefs of thoughtful politicians and statesmen. The contributions that he made to this crystallising process, out of which so much has grown since then, may be told at the close of these chapters ; and something also may be told of the work that he did on one or two subjects that were of special interest to him, in which his work and writing has since borne fruit.

In the House of Commons in 1901 the principal criticism of Admiralty policy was directed to the question of the new works that were in process of construction at Gibraltar, and secondly to the relative strength and equipment of the Mediterranean fleet.

On some more detailed points of administration the discussion also turned ; on the urgent question of the arrears and delay in shipbuilding in the dockyards, and also on the vexed and much-debated question of the type of boiler to be selected for the ships of the Navy.

The Gibraltar question was raised in the House in a motion which was brought forward, advocating the suspension of the works that were in progress on the western side of the Rock, in favour of a new scheme of works, docks, and harbour, which should be commenced on the opposite or eastern side of Gibraltar ; a site which it was contended would not be exposed to the fire of artillery from the Spanish mainland, a fire which might make the present harbourage untenable.

The Admiralty's reply was to the effect that, desirable as it would undoubtedly be to have a protected anchorage and dock accommodation on the eastern side, very formidable difficulties stood in the way ; that it was estimated that such works would probably not be completed in fifteen years, and that it would be out of the question to keep the Fleet for such a length of time without any protection from torpedo or other sea attack. The safety and efficiency of the Mediterranean Fleet demanded the immediate provision of dock accommodation, which even in time of peace was urgently required.

The Admiralty had always recognised the fact that the western side of the Rock might be exposed to land fire ; but this fact did not in their estimation outweigh the comparative advantages of the western harbour that was now approaching completion.

The length of time before an eastern harbour could be completed, the amount of money that would be required for the undertaking, and the necessity for immediate protection from torpedo attack and from fire from ships on the western side, made it clear that, though an eastern harbour would be doubtless an additional strength and advantage, it could not be treated by the Admiralty as an alternative.

A considerable amount of criticism was also directed to the alleged want of preparedness of the Mediterranean Fleet, its relative insufficiency, and its weakness in cruisers, and some added importance was given to the charges that were made, by the statement that they voiced the opinions of distinguished officers of the Mediterranean Fleet. This criticism was not directed so much against the general standard of strength at which the Navy was maintained, anxiety on that head being fairly met by the statements that were made by Lord Goschen and Lord Selborne, which were generally regarded as being satisfactory ; but was directed more especially against the relative weakness of a particular fleet, and the whole question of the arrangement and distribution of the Navy was freely brought into the discussion.

On this point the Admiralty had the right to say, unhesitatingly, that on the question of the distribution of

ships, and the comparative strengths of the different fleets and squadrons, the Admiralty, and the Admiralty alone, have all the information which can enable a right judgment to be made. They, and they alone, know what are the general calls of the whole Empire on the services and ships of the Navy, and the Admiralty alone can decide what is the proportion of its war strength at which the Mediterranean, or any other squadron, ought to be maintained in time of peace.

Changes were being gradually carried out in the composition of the Mediterranean fleet to bring it up to a more modern standard, and to make it more homogeneous. When the Estimates for 1902 were introduced in the House in the following February, and the debate turned again to the question of the ships in the Mediterranean, the Secretary to the Admiralty was able to point to changes that had been effected, to additions made in the strength of this and other squadrons; and also to the list of new ships which would shortly be ready, which as they became available would take the places of, or supplement, ships already attached to our fleets, or those which are in reserve at home or abroad.

At the conclusion of the same speech, he spoke of the vigilant interest that he believed the country ought constantly to take in the affairs of the Navy, and of the necessity that he saw for continual progressive changes and reforms in its service.

"There has been a feeling of anxiety," he said, "with regard to the condition of our Navy. I think it is absolutely inevitable that this should be so. At a time when the outlook is as perplexed as it has been during the last year or two, when we have given such great pledges to fortune by the transfer of our troops over the sea, it is not only probable, but certain that men will ask themselves whether our great arm, which alone enables us to undertake this enterprise, is as strong as it should be. I welcome that feeling of anxiety; it would betray a very unfortunate attitude of mind in the country if that feeling did not exist. . . .

I believe that the Navy has two classes of enemy—those who say that the Navy is all wrong, all rotten, and not to be depended upon in time of war, and, the other class, more dangerous, and, I believe, more numerous, who say that the Navy is all right and that we need not trouble our heads about it. There is no human institution for which we can claim that perfection, and if there were, I am perfectly certain that institution would never be the Navy of this country. Circumstances change from

day to day, the dangers which threaten us vary, if they do not increase, from day to day, and the Navy which is not perpetually adapting itself to the circumstances of the hour, and trying to bring itself abreast of the efforts of others, is a Navy which is not even standing still, but is going back. I believe that criticism is needful. I do not think that in the Admiralty, as I happen to know it, stimulus is much needed. If I may be permitted I would say to those Hon. Members with whom I have so often had the honour of collaborating in this great common cause, that having some small part in the administration of this great department there has been no cessation of my activity and of my hope. On the contrary, I would say that many of those subjects on which we worked together are now in process of accomplishment.

Heavier armaments are being put into existing ships. A new and stronger type of destroyer is being created. It is admitted that the submarine is the reply to the submarine, and that this class of vessel cannot be regarded merely as the weapon of the weaker power. Ocean trials of ships with the rival boilers have been carried out.

The spirit which should animate and does animate the Board of Admiralty with regard to the preparation of the Fleet for sea may be expressed in one phrase—the preparation of the Fleet for war. The Navy has no *raison d'être* at all, except as an instrument to be used in war. Any one who touches even the fringe of the administration of that great service must feel haunted by the idea that all this will be tested one day. When the guns are shotted, when the war heads are on the torpedoes, when the sound of firing is heard in the Channel and losses are reported, and when men's hearts fail them, that is the time when all this will be tested, and I truly believe that that is the conviction which is in the mind of every man who is concerned in the administration of the Admiralty. If it were not so we might feel hopeless enough as to the safety of this country in time of war. I do not pretend for a moment that the ideal of which we are all in pursuit, and which we shall never attain, has even been approached as nearly as some may imagine. In a Navy like ours, where all has grown up by degrees, where many appliances must remain which were appropriate to the days in which they were created, but are less appropriate to the day to which they have survived, there must always be a certain proportion of our material, a certain number of our appliances, which are not what we desire them to be. But, I believe that by pruning, as we have been pruning on an almost unparalleled scale, the unprofitable elements of our Fleet; by perpetually practising in peace those things which must be done in time of war; by appointing those officers to commands in peace who will have to exercise authority in time of war, and by appealing on every occasion, when we feel that we are not strong enough, to the ready support of the country, which we shall always receive, we shall be doing all we possibly can to prepare the fleet for that day of trial which we hope will never come, but which we all feel will be fateful and critical to us when it does come."

The principal work of the Board during the autumn

of 1902 was the formation of the "New Scheme of Training" for the Navy, which was introduced in the winter of 1902-3. This subject is dealt with at some length in the following chapter; the questions of the intellectual equipment of the Services, and of Imperial Organisation for Defence, being also dealt with separately in Chapter XII.

The Secretary to the Admiralty, in introducing the Estimates in 1903, and in his other speeches in the House in that year, naturally devoted much of his attention to these subjects, and on them the principal and more serious debates turned. The magnitude, however, of the Estimates that were asked for, and the large increase in the principal votes, called for explanation, and led to some discussion.

"I have to present to the House,"¹ he said, "Navy Estimates of a magnitude, I believe, unparalleled in peace or war. I do so as the official representative of a great department; but I do not forfeit my position as a private citizen; and as a citizen I cannot help sharing the regret, which I am sure every member of the House must feel, that the bitter competition and rivalry among the nations continues, and makes this enormous, unproductive expenditure a necessary burden. I think we shall all agree in feeling that if the word of power could be spoken which would call a halt, and cause the discontinuance of the rivalry among the nations of Europe, we and they would benefit in the highest degree. Perhaps I have said more than I ought to say as representing the Admiralty on this subject; but I desire to make it clear to the House that which is my opinion, and I believe that of every member of the Board of Admiralty, that we take no pride in, that we profess no exultation over the magnitude of these Estimates; and I think that the depth of our feeling in the matter may be taken as the measure of our conviction, that these Estimates, large as they are, are necessary in the circumstances in which we live; and the only way in which we hope to commend them to the House of Commons is by proving, as we can, that the money voted so lavishly in the past has been satisfactorily and effectively expended for the purposes for which it was voted, and by showing that the money which may be voted will be so expended in the future. That is, I think, the only satisfactory justification we can put forward for this enormous expenditure; we must prove that it is necessary; we must show that it has been, and will be, well spent. I know that the system has not been tested. It is true, as is often said, that the expenditure and policy of the Admiralty have never been put to the test and trial of a great naval war. I am sure it is the fact that the Board of Admiralty are under no illusion as

¹ Speech on Introduction of Navy Estimates, March 1903.

to the depth and the intensity of the responsibility that rests upon them ; and I can assure the House that the spirit that prevails there is not alien to that existing in the country. They are united in the endeavour to meet future exigencies and deeply conscious of the responsibilities they have to bear.

The total vote shows an excess over the vote of last year of over £3,000,000 sterling. The personnel, which is of the first importance, shows an increase of 4600 over the vote of last year, and the votes by which we can best measure the amount of actual addition to the strength of the Navy—votes 8 and 9 for material, shipbuilding, guns, and gun-mountings—have been increased by no less than £2,000,000 sterling, or if we add, as we ought to add, the appropriation of grants-in-aid, the gross increase is £2,271,224."

The criticism of the Opposition was naturally directed against this large increase, especially in regard to the vote for new construction ; and Mr. Edmund Robertson, speaking for the Front Opposition Bench, lamented that Peace Conferences seemed to have met in vain, since our naval expenditure, which in 1898 amounted to twenty-three millions, now amounted to thirty-four and a half millions.

The increase was, indeed, unhappily large, and the burden of such an expenditure great. But the cardinal fact that lay behind these estimates, that alone justified them, and that made them necessary, was expressed in the speeches of Sir Charles Dilke and of the Secretary to the Admiralty. They pointed out, in reply to Mr. Robertson and other critics, that our expenditure upon the Navy depended, not upon our desires and aspirations, but on the actions and programme of the other great Naval Powers. No pause or cessation could safely be made in our naval preparations, unless it could be made consistently with the action of those Powers.

There had been no such cessation in the maritime preparations of other countries ; they had shown, on the contrary, an increased activity ; and the paramount duty of the Admiralty was, therefore, to be in a position to guarantee the country against attack and defeat by any combination of Powers with which we might reasonably expect to be at war. Whatever sum was needed to make sure of this result must be demanded, and to ask for or to vote a lesser sum would be an act of folly.

The House of Commons acquiesced in the reasoning. "We have got through our Estimates with lightning speed," Oakeley wrote on July 3. "Instead of dragging on till midnight, as they usually do, they were over by six o'clock; I have now got every single Navy Vote without Closure, a record since the new supply arrangements came into force. The fact is not in any way to my credit, but is simply due to the hot weather, the interest taken in things other than the Navy, and, perhaps, to the apathy of the House of Commons about the Service. Nevertheless the result, to whatever causes due, is most satisfactory."

Before closing this chapter and passing on to the New Scheme of Training, the subject of which occupied much of the time of the House of Commons and of the Board of Admiralty, and to which the next chapter is devoted, a few of his letters written to his sister, Mrs. Vere O'Brien, during his first year at the Admiralty are given here:—

"ADMIRALTY, *January 23, '01.*

"Here we are with our flags drooping at half-mast, our hearts in our boots, the flashes of the Park guns throwing red streaks upon my window, and their boom coming heavy through the fog. Here we are all in black—a blacker London you never saw—all men and all women really mourning, really grieving with honest human grief over the loss of our dear Queen; and grieving, too, many of them, over the evils which her death may bring upon the country. And yet, and yet! Well, I have just been swearing myself in at the House, and as I took the book, among a batch of others, I opened it, and my eye lit on the passage which faced me. It was the first sentence of the first verse of the eleventh chapter of the Romans, and in that passage I found an exact expression of my own current of thought and feeling at this moment. Look up the passage and you will see.

"I say to you, as I have said to Francie, that in my judgment we all want a tonic. We are getting naturally into too low a condition, and it is doing us harm. We have, Heaven knows! plenty to alarm us, plenty over

which we have a right to grieve, and about which we must feel anxious. But we are a great people still, sixty millions of us, with one speech, one past, and one literature. We are not going to fall out of the front rank like a leaf falling from a tree. Not at all. Let us think of our assets, of the tremendous advantages we have if we have sense and resolution enough to profit by them. Other nations, too, have their troubles, many and great, but of these we never think. Therefore, think I, the time has come to say *Sursum Corda*, to take heart of grace, to cheer up other people and ourselves; and I honestly believe that every man or woman who, according to his or her opportunities, does this now, will be deserving well of their country.

"You know my favourite incident and event in all history is the vote of the Roman Senate after Varro's rout.

". . . And so, dear, with all blessings and good wishes, and with the assurance that I love you as well under King Edward as I did under Queen Victoria—I am your loving brother,

H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER.

"God save the King!"

"ADMIRALTY, 4th December 1901.

"It is 2.15. I am sitting at my desk with all the electric lights burning, and a thick, dirty fog blocking up all the windows. You will observe that I have no very pleasant objects to contemplate, and the perusal of papers, even on such interesting subjects as the pay of a 'timekeeper at Hong-Kong,' or the appointment of an assistant chemist to the Admiralty, palls after a time. So how can I better find an agreeable subject for contemplation, or a more interesting occupation, than by turning my mental eye on Ballyalla and its mistress, and writing you a letter. . . .

"I am, as you see, at my post, like the Roman soldier at Pompeii. Some day my body will be dug out of the solid fog. I shall be found with my pen in my hand, and the word 'boilers' engraved on my petrified and well-preserved heart. I shall become an example of devotion to duty, and shall have a place in school-books.

"I have been vaccinated, officially; they took the lymph

from an Army cow at Aldershot, and I think the military must have engineered the thing as a subtle revenge for my attacks on the War Office, for it was the most '*taking*' cow I ever had to do with. I shall bear my honourable scars to my death. But I'm convalescent now, and I'll pay the W.O. out yet. We have a dinner-party to-night. I wish you were going to be a party to our party; it would amuse you. — and — and — and — are coming. A gay company, is it not? But not one of them—no, not one—as gay as you, my dear; so come over and see us soon, and we will have a feast in your honour! I am just finishing Hardy's *Far from the Madding Crowd*—a fine book, lofty and gentle and moving. I wonder, though, whether our Dorsetshire peasants do, or ever did, talk such neat Shakespearian English as Hardy would have us believe?

" . . . Isn't it sad having Parliament again so soon—the middle of January? Detestable, I think; personally, I should like to go on with my work here till I could work no longer. Actually, I may be kicked out any day, either by a change of Government or by my constituents, which is sad, is it not? . . .—Ever your loving Brother."

On the day of the Thanksgiving for Peace after the South African War, he writes:—

"June 8th, 1902.

"You were not absent from my thoughts when the news of the Peace reached me; and you were again very present to them to-day during the great Service of Thanksgiving in St. Paul's.

"It was impossible, in this day of real and legitimate joy and thanksgiving, not to look back into the dark days that have gone before. Impossible not to recall the great national and private sorrows which have thrown their shadows over our pathway since that sad autumn of 1899. It pleases me to think that the only news of the war which reached our Dearest One at Malvern¹ was of the success of our troops, brief and delusive as that success was. She would have taught us all how to bear the reverses which

¹ See p. 142.

followed, she would have been the bravest and wisest guide ; but the whole struggle with its losses, its waste, its long-drawn weariness, would have cut her to the heart. So it is well she knew no more. Dark as the earlier days were—and I can still almost feel the oppression of life while they lasted—they brought some good. Our People, who lack many gifts, yet own many which are not bestowed in equal measure, perhaps, on any other people. We did bear ourselves well through the time of trial, we did not flinch, and, above all, we stood by the men who were taking the risks, never betrayed them, and never abused them, while the trial lasted. And then the cloud lifted just as it seemed impenetrable, or only about to break in some destroying storm. How great was the relief ! Then there came again the long trying period of slow progress, of losses, of doubtful successes, and real failures. And now at last we have the end, as we desired it, as we meant it to be from the beginning. ‘Unconditional surrender’ by the men who chose to violate our territory ; the British Flag replaced on the flag-staff at Pretoria ; the work of our soldiers done, and done thoroughly. And yet with all this, happily, there is none of the shame and misery that humiliate and embitter a brave but defeated enemy. How strange must the present scenes in South Africa be to our vilifiers, and yet how comprehensible they are to us, and what a strength it is to us as a nation that we have been able to make them possible.

“Of course the War is full of tremendous warnings. ‘If all this be done in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?’ What might not happen if we were fighting some great armed nation or combination of alliances? What, indeed, might not have happened had any Power felt strong enough to translate its ill-will into evil deeds during the past three years?

“You may be sure that these reflections, and many more which spring out of them, are very present to the mind of a Secretary to the Admiralty, who knows something of the Navy, and who realises its weaknesses and its strength.

“The Cathedral was packed to-day. Fortunately M. and I had excellent places under the dome and close to the

pulpit. . . . The sermon was not good ; it was more like reflections from a newspaper than the kind of address which might have touched, and would have touched, the minds of a congregation, attuned as ours was to-day, to receive and respond to a very high note. But it is easy to criticise, infinitely hard to give correct expression to the feeling which is in many hearts, but which so few of those who entertain it can formulate in words."

CHAPTER XI

“The command of the world’s forces belongs henceforth to those who understand them best and know how to use them most skilfully, who have best learnt how to transform the power of knowledge into the power of action.”

J. R. THURSFIELD.

The Work of the Board of Admiralty—The New Scheme of Training for the Navy—The Authors of the Scheme.

THE greatest and most serious problem which faced the Board of Admiralty was one which had confronted many previous Boards, and which had given occasion for much anxious consideration and thought to successive Lords of Admiralty, as well as to naval officers and civilians who had studied naval questions.

The change which in the nineteenth century converted the Navy from a Navy of sailing ships into a Navy of steam ships, involved a revolution wide and far reaching, the real nature of which was only slowly and gradually to be realised. For some seventy years after the change from sail to steam had taken place, the training of officers and men of the Fleet was still accomplished by means of what has been described as the “incomparable discipline of masts and sails.” It was rightly felt by the Navy, and by successive Boards of Admiralty, that a discipline and training which had made the Naval Service what it was, and what it had been in the days of St. Vincent, Hawke, and Nelson, could not lightly be abandoned ; nor could it possibly be dispensed with unless and until some other system of training, comparable with it, should be found to take its place. There were, however, distinguished naval officers, and many thoughtful civilian critics, who saw and pointed out that we had come to the parting of the ways, and that a revolution in our system of training officers and men would become necessary, if we were

to keep abreast of modern conditions and not see ourselves surpassed by other nations. The change that was becoming inevitable cannot be better described than in these words used by Mr. J. R. Thursfield, in a lecture given by him in the year 1900 at the Royal United Service Institution. He said that when once the discipline of masts and sails as an essential element in naval training is given up

"We are brought face to face with the tremendous problem of adapting the modern seaman to his new environment. . . . No solution of the problem will be adequate or permanent which does not take rational and scientific account of the momentous revolution involved. . . .

The problem is how to develop maritime skill out of conditions new to the sailor and never yet fully tested by war, how to mould the crew of a modern warship into as consummate a fighting organism as the crews which fought in sailing ships from Gravelines to Trafalgar. The problem is not to be solved by rule of thumb, by tinkering here and there at a routine still saturated at every point by the tradition of masts and sails and their discipline. The rule of thumb has had its day. The command of the world's forces, of the forces of nature and those of society alike, belongs henceforth to those who understand them best and know how to use them most skilfully, who have best learnt how to transform the power of knowledge into the power of action."

That successive Boards of Admiralty should have shrunk from attempting to untie the knot of this problem was natural; for it was clear that if it were to be solved at all, it would involve not merely small reforms, but a practical revolution, and the obstacles that stand in the way of such revolutions are great. The moment, however, came at last, when, the final abandonment of the training of masts and sails having been carried out, the Admiralty was obliged to face and admit the organic change that had taken place in the art of naval war, and to recognise the new supremacy of steam and the supreme importance of machinery.

"Everything in the modern fleet," wrote one of the most distinguished of our Admirals, "is done by machinery, be it steam, hydraulic compressed air, or electricity, to which will probably be added, in the near future, explosive oil and liquid air. Not only are the ships propelled solely by machinery, but they are steered by machinery. Their principal arms—gun and torpedo—are worked by machinery. They are lit by machinery; the water used by those on board for drinking, cooking, and washing, is produced by machinery; messages which were formerly transmitted by voice-pipe now go by telephone. The orders which the Admiral wishes to give to the Fleet could formerly

only be made by flags in the day and by lamps at night ; they are now made by electricity, that is, wireless telegraphy and electric flashing lamps. Orders which were formerly written out by hand are now produced by the typewriter or by the printing machine. Formerly the Admiral visited another ship in his pulling barge, now he goes in a steam-boat, which has been hoisted out by means of a steam-engine. The anchor, formerly hove up by hand, is now worked by an engine. The live bullocks, which were formerly taken to sea, are replaced by frozen carcasses maintained in that condition by machinery. If a fire breaks out in the ship, the steam-pumps drown it. If the ship springs a leak, steam pumps keep down the water. The very air that those on board between decks breathe is provided by a fan driven by machinery."

The development of machinery and labour-saving appliances in men-of-war was indeed vast and ever increasing. Steam and machinery as the motive power in our fighting ships, and as the principal factors in the Navy of the twentieth century, had "come to stay"; and the sooner the changed conditions were frankly faced, and the training of the Navy brought into harmony with them, the better it would be.

It was of the utmost importance that any new system which should introduce such reforms should be conceived on broad lines, that it should embrace all branches of the Service, and should be a large and statesmanlike effort to deal with the problem of officering and training the Navy as a whole.

The question that faced the Admiralty divided itself into two principal parts:—

1. The anomalous and difficult position of engineers and marine officers,—a position which created a prejudicial division of feeling between the different branches of the Service.

2. The need for a more modern and scientific system of education for all naval officers.

It was impossible for the Admiralty to feel satisfied that the education given under the existing system was adequate to meet all the changing and growing requirements of a modern Navy.

To Oakeley the educational aspect of the question naturally appealed, and had an especial interest. Among his papers and memoranda of the years 1901 and 1902

there are many notes touching on the education and training of the Navy. One Minute, written in the summer of 1901, after a study of the results of the examinations of junior naval officers for the past two or three years, gives the impressions left on his mind by their perusal, and some of the conclusions to which he thought they pointed.

"At a time," he wrote, "when education is daily becoming more necessary in every rank and profession, the education of the naval officer is falling behind. . . . That the present system has produced admirable officers is undoubted,—but what is good may always be made better; and, at the present day, it is not possible to accept the view that this country can with impunity allow the practical and theoretical instruction of its naval officers to fall behind that which is given to the officers of other nations. To do so is to inflict an injustice on our officers, and to incur a danger to the nation." . . . Education, he goes on to point out, "if it is to be effective must be given in such a way as to *attract* and *interest* students, it must be *systematic* and *progressive*, and should be given under conditions most likely to produce *concentration* in the mind of the pupils. . . . Few officers, if any, would contend that under the present system the instruction given to midshipmen on board sea-going ships is satisfactory, or is conveyed in such a way as to attract and interest them. On the contrary, it is notorious that in nine cases out of ten the instruction is looked upon by the young officers as a nuisance and sometimes as a farce. It is imparted at casual hours in unsuitable places, and is subject at all times to interruptions, which are frequent or the reverse, not in deference to any rule, but to the particular point of view of the captain of the ship. The appliances and apparatus necessary for the illustration of scientific lectures are almost entirely absent. Under these circumstances it is not to be wondered at that the teaching of physics, etc., should prove as unsatisfactory as it appears to be. The education given on ships at sea cannot be *systematic*. There is ample evidence that it is not *progressive*. Many officers frankly admit that when they go to Greenwich they practically have to begin their school over again, where they left off on the *Britannia*. Very few have made any serious advance during the period spent at sea, and it is probable that none on entering Greenwich have made the advance which might be expected after so long a period nominally devoted to instruction.

It is clear that the system is not calculated to promote *concentration* in the minds of the pupils. On the contrary, not only is the instruction liable to constant interruption, but subjects which should be prosecuted continuously are studied at irregular intervals, and not in accordance with any reasonable or well-regulated scheme. . . ."¹

The Minute closes with the suggestion, that in lieu of the existing system the age of entry should be lowered, and a

¹ Minute. June 1901.

prolonged educational course given—beginning at an earlier age, and ending with a cruise, for purposes of instruction, on board a special sea-going training-ship.

In another Minute, written in July 1902, and submitted to the Board of Admiralty in September of the same year, he writes :—

“ I understand that the question of the Education of Naval Officers will shortly be discussed by the Board, and I ask leave, therefore, to submit the following remarks with regard to this subject. The views expressed are practically a summary of those contained in various minutes already submitted.

1. No advantage has been derived from the alteration of the age of entry of cadets, and the hope that by raising the age of entry the value of a Public School training would be obtained for a large number of naval officers has not been realised. The total number of entries from Public Schools is 23 per cent of the whole, and there is no reason to believe that it will increase. The arrangements for preparing boys in some of the principal Public Schools are most inadequate. Moreover, it is to be remembered that the chief value of a Public School training consists in the lessons which are learned in the later years of the boy's school career. From the point of view of instruction he learns little enough at any time ; but in the higher forms he may learn to exercise authority and to take his own part in a somewhat complex society.

It is submitted, therefore, that it is wise to go back from the present regulation age to the earlier age of twelve and a half or thirteen.

2. The *Britannia*, or other institution carrying on the same work as the *Britannia*, should become the Public School of the young officer, and the course should be sufficiently long to enable him to obtain a thorough grounding in all the branches of study which he will have to pursue during his career. Among these branches of study should be included some knowledge of Literature and History, which is necessary to a gentleman in the Naval Service as it is to gentlemen in any other profession. It is suggested that the first year might, roughly speaking, be given up to general education, the second year to more specialised study, and the third and fourth years to specific training in the duties of an officer ; this training to be given in the first instance at the College, but largely afloat, and during the last nine months in a sea-going training-ship furnished with a proper staff of instructors. . . .

It is submitted that the proper principle in training for the Navy, as in training for in any other profession, is to provide the best kind of instruction under the most favourable circumstances, and so to arrange, that during the time the pupil is under instruction he still devotes his principal energies to this task. . . .

3. It has been suggested in another paper that it will be well in the future to enter candidates for the engineering branch of the Navy through the *Britannia*, and if this course be adopted, it is clear that the accommodation at Dartmouth College will at once become inadequate. (The question of the additional accommodation that would thus be

rendered necessary was discussed, and the possibility of a second Naval College in the neighbourhood of Portsmouth suggested.

4. The training of senior officers is, of course, bound up with that of the junior officers, inasmuch as the whole scheme of the examinations now depends upon the Cadets' and Midshipmen's course. If the suggested plan were adopted, the first course at Greenwich might be considerably altered, for at present the three months spent there are usually devoted to learning or re-learning what ought to have been taught on the sea-going ships. The three months, or even a longer period, might be devoted with advantage to more advanced studies, possibly to the learning of languages.

5. In one branch of naval education we are undoubtedly deficient. In the higher learning of the profession—strategy, tactics, and certain scientific branches—it cannot be said that the British Navy gives lessons to the world, which, considering the position of this country, it ought to do. It is admitted by most naval officers that the institution of a School for Strategy, etc., at Greenwich has been a step in the right direction, but it can hardly be said that Greenwich has yet attained the position which it ought undoubtedly to occupy. It is not largely attended, its *personnel*, although able, is limited, and the School has not as yet the prestige which is necessary to give full value to its teaching. If an opportunity could be found for transferring the school to one of our naval ports—preferably Portsmouth—the opportunities of giving practical instruction in connection with strategical and tactical problems would be greatly increased, and it is submitted that if this opportunity were to occur, the transfer should be made.”¹

In the summer of 1902 Lord Selborne's Board was joined by Sir John Fisher as Second Sea Lord. His great ability, and the intense personal energy that he threw into every question that affected the Naval Service, made his advent to the Board at this time of the greatest importance. Oakeley often said, then and in after years, that Lord Selborne's wise and far-sighted methods, which made him so well able to carry out a great scheme to a successful issue, together with Sir John's immense ability and “driving power,” formed a combination which was of incalculable advantage to the Admiralty at that time, and a partnership with which it was a privilege to be associated and to work.

Christmas Day 1902 saw the publication of Lord Selborne's Memorandum, outlining the scheme that had been drawn up by Lord Selborne and his Board, after long consideration and many meetings. Many months of

¹ The transfer to Portsmouth was made in the year following.

further work were needed before all the details of the new scheme were fully completed ; but in December its main principles were settled ; and, in view of their great importance to the Naval Service and to the country, the First Lord made them known at the earliest possible date.

In November 1902 Oakeley writes in a letter to his sister :—

“ We have been very busy at the Admiralty of late, and as, I hope, you will learn before very long, busy to some purpose. The fact is we are going to make a great revolution in many things concerning the Navy, a revolution which will leave its mark on the Naval Service for many a year to come. I am so sanguine as to the ultimate result being good, that I am truly glad to be a member of the Board which is making the changes. But it is a big responsibility all the same. I couldn't have believed, two years ago, that so many of the changes I so ardently desired would come about within my lifetime, still less that they should actually come to pass before I left office ; and yet I think that is going to happen,—to a large extent it has already happened.”

In another letter to his sister on Christmas Eve 1902, he writes again of the new scheme: “ I hope that to-morrow's paper will bring you an account of the Admiralty's Christmas gift to the Navy and the nation, at least the First Lord's Memorandum is to appear to-morrow. . . . It is well that credit should be given where credit is due. It is really due to three men. Principally to Sir John Fisher, whose originality, perseverance, and energy have made the thing possible. Next to Sir John credit is due to the First Lord, on whom, after all, all the responsibility rests, and on whom the chief blame will fall if the scheme fails ; and thirdly, and in a high degree, credit is due to Lord Walter Kerr, a splendid, thoroughgoing, old-school sailor of the best kind, who has justly earned the perfect confidence of the officers. . . . A smaller man would have simply set his face against the whole thing, and either have made it impossible or have sulked. Lord Walter, on the contrary, having once made up his mind to accept the new principles, has been most

loyal, and has done everything in his power to make it a success. The mere fact of his acquiescence is worth an immense amount. The rest of us, of course, have done our part. Naturally I have worked at the business with delight, because I see so many of my own ideas fulfilled. But the real authors of the scheme are the men I have named, and I am proud to have worked under them. Perhaps I have had more to do with the educational arrangements than with any other part of the plan, and I shall be very happy if I succeed in getting these put on a broad and sound basis."

Lord Selborne in his Memorandum recognised the changes that had taken place, and the need for a greater co-ordination of knowledge between Executive officers and engineers. The need for common knowledge had given the opportunity for common instruction.

Under the new scheme it was proposed to make an entire change in the system of the entry and training of officers. Hitherto there had been three systems of entry and three kinds of training. Henceforward there would be one source of supply, one system of entry, and, for many years of an officer's life, one system of training. The objects aimed at were to give the best possible education to all naval officers, to enable them to acquire the foundation which all officers should build upon, namely, a thorough knowledge of the duties of a seaman and officer on board a modern ship at sea; and after having given this common foundation, to provide for the differentiation necessary for specialised duties. Further, to get rid of the separation of sentiment between officers of different branches, and to increase the available supply of junior officers trained as seamen.

With these objects in view Lord Selborne's Memorandum proposed:—

To have one class only of naval officers, who are to enter as naval cadets between the ages of twelve and thirteen.

To train them all exactly alike until after they have passed for sub-lieutenant, at about twenty.

At the age of about twenty, distribution to be made into the three branches of engineer, executive, and marine officers.

The Memorandum contained many other provisions; for the new scheme affected not the officers only of the Navy, but the training and position of every rank and branch of men who served with the Fleet. To a great extent, however, criticism and debate turned on the questions of the lowering of the age of entry to twelve years, on the system of nomination adopted, and on the common entry and training of executive, engineer, and marine officers.

In the discussions on the New Scheme in the Press and in the House of Commons, although it was much debated, and although there was some active opposition to the changes that were introduced, the Scheme met on the whole with a cordial reception, as a broadly conceived solution of a very difficult problem. It is noteworthy, considering how drastic and far-reaching the provisions were, that the Scheme should immediately have met with so large a measure of acceptance and assent from many widely different quarters and from both sides of the House of Commons, and that it should have encountered so little really hostile or destructive criticism.

Certain modifications of the Scheme have altered it slightly since its first introduction, and it is probable that further modifications may yet be found necessary when the working of its various parts has been thoroughly tested by time and experience. The machinery set up was big; and it may from time to time need considerable adjustment to make it harmonise with the needs of the Service. That it should thus be adapted and adjusted by a gradual process of evolution, is entirely consistent with the history and traditions of the Navy.

In the months which followed the publication of Lord Selborne's Memorandum, besides the financial sides of the question, which belonged more especially to the Financial Secretary, Oakeley gave constant time and work to the Committees that sat week by week at the Admiralty to decide the general and the detailed arrangements of the

education to be given in the Naval colleges of Osborne and Dartmouth.

The appointment of the Director of Naval Education and of the men who would have to organise and direct the new Colleges, the methods of education to be followed, the standard to be aimed at, and the appliances for scientific and for practical instruction that should be provided; all these things had to be considered and decided upon. A number of young naval officers took part regularly in these discussions, contributing practical and valuable experience to the Committees, and increasing day by day Oakeley's admiration for the Service to which they belonged. That the scheme has worked as successfully as it has done, was, he always felt and said, largely due to their practical co-operation and help.

If undue stress should seem to have been laid on the educational aspects of the "New Scheme of Training," and insufficient space to have been given to other aspects quite as interesting and important, it is because, in the limited space which can be devoted to the subject in a short Memoir, it would be impossible to deal with it exhaustively, and it seems best to dwell on that side which Oakeley had made especially his own, and with which his own experience and training made him in some ways peculiarly fitted to deal.

CHAPTER XII

The Necessity for a better Organisation of the Resources of the Empire
—The Committee of Defence—Standardisation of Dimensions and
Material in the Navy—The Standardisation Committee—Victualling
in the Navy.

IT has already been said that among the questions to which Oakeley gave much thought and work when he was at the Admiralty, and which he felt to be of the greatest and most vital importance, was the need for creating a permanent Consultative Body to which the problems of the defence of the Empire and the utilisation of its resources for war, should be entrusted. On this question it may fairly be claimed that he had some share in helping to crystallise public opinion, and in getting a wider and more general acceptance for conclusions that had long been arrived at, and taught by experts, such as Sir George Clarke, Mr. Spenser Wilkinson, and other authoritative writers on military and naval policy.

A Memorandum, drawn up by him in 1902, at the request of Lord Selborne, with whom he had often discussed this subject, was sent by the First Lord to the Prime Minister, and was submitted to the Cabinet for their consideration. It summarises the arguments that he desired to enforce, pointing out that no true organisation for war had hitherto been created, and no authoritative body of opinion with regard to imperial defence had been established; and it goes on to suggest the nature, constitution, and functions of the body that he desired to see created.

The country owes to the statesmanship of Mr. Balfour the great step that was taken a year later, in 1903, when the old "Committee of the Cabinet on Defence" was reconstructed, important alterations being made in its constitution and functions, and the "Committee of Imperial Defence" was formed.

The Memorandum of 1902 pointed out the grave need that then existed for a more complete organisation for war, and urged: "That for the purpose of creating and maintaining such an improved system of organisation it is necessary to create a special body, whose duties shall be different from, and additional to, those now assigned to the Intelligence Departments of the two Services." The Memorandum points out the complexity of the problems of the defence of the Empire, and the existence in other countries of bodies of experts specially trained to consider and report upon such problems.

The Intelligence Departments of the two Services could not, under existing conditions, do all that the country had the right to require; nor would a mere extension of these departments provide all that the situation demanded.

Not only were establishments of the British Naval and Military Intelligence Departments "inferior in point of numbers to those of Germany; but in this country the relative importance of the two Services was in no way reflected in the appointment of the intellectual equipment assigned to them. That the Intelligence Department of the British Navy should be manifestly inferior in regard to the number of its *personnel* to the Intelligence Department of the British Army, is an anomaly which cannot be satisfactorily explained. . . ."

An elaborate scientific training is given to the German General Staff, but "the problem of defending Germany . . . sinks into insignificance compared with the far greater and more elaborate problem presented by the needs and circumstances of the British Empire. And yet it is no exaggeration to say that the continuous and scientific study of the problem as a whole, is 'Nobody's Business'; and that no body of British officers receives a training to be compared with that which is made obligatory for all officers serving on the German General Staff. It seems reasonable to infer that the more complicated problem requires the higher organisation to deal with it, and that we cannot safely dispense with that which Germany has found to be essential."

The existing Committee of the Cabinet on Defence was

incapable of supervising and directing the defence of the Empire. None of the members of the Committee were specialists ; and, being occupied in very important matters of State, they were unable to give more than a small portion of time and attention to the great problems on which they were supposed to advise the Cabinet as a whole. Moreover, no continuity of policy was possible to the Committee, for no Minutes of its proceedings were kept, and if continuity of policy is to be preserved, and a body of accepted doctrine is to be created, the keeping of such a record is absolutely essential.

Examples are given in the Memorandum illustrating the need for better organisation, and instancing matters of vital importance to the defence of the Empire, which it was contended had been neglected or overlooked.

"Many minor though important examples might be given," he wrote, "of the lack of a proper co-ordination of the resources of the Empire for the purposes of offence and defence, but the most important of all is furnished by the fact that our system of offence and defence has never been organised in such a way as to accord with the peculiar circumstances of our Empire. There is not at the present time, and there never has been in the past, an Empire of which all the principal communications were by sea, of which the central State and two of the most important outlying states were islands, and between all parts of which water-communication was possible. . . . But in the British Empire no attempt has been made to specialise or to devise any system peculiarly appropriate to the needs of a Maritime State. . . .

"Inadequate attention has been paid to our very special problems, the relation of the Navy to the Army are ill-defined, and no serious attempt has been made to ensure the co-operation of the two Services either in peace or war, nor is there any interchange of personnel, such as might reasonably be expected where perfect harmony and mutual comprehension are so desirable."

And he urges "that the absence of any specialised organisation suitable to the peculiar circumstances of our Empire furnishes a strong argument for a change in the

existing system, under which a reasonable adaptation of means to ends, and an economical and scientific direction of force are still lacking."

Great as was the step taken by Mr. Balfour and his Cabinet in 1903, when they constituted the Imperial Committee of Defence, and great as is the progress that has been made since that time, it will not be claimed that we have yet arrived at any final or perfect solution of the complex problem of organisation for defence. It is agreed that the Committee of Defence still falls far short of what such a Committee for the defence of the Empire might be, and ought to become. A perfected system of co-operation and interchange of plans between the two Services is still to seek.

It is still probably almost as true now as it was when this Memorandum was written, that one of the greatest difficulties encountered by Ministers of the Crown in dealing with naval and military questions, is the absence of any body of sound and authoritative professional opinion, on which they can rely for guidance, and Ministers may still, even now, be heard to speak with pardonable bitterness of the contradictory advice tendered to them by their professional advisers.

"It is one of the most remarkable proofs of the inadequacy of our present arrangements that there is no accepted view with regard to any great question regarding the naval and military Services, and that no man or body of men speaks on naval and military subjects with an authority which commands general respect. It is not in the least remarkable that this should be the case. If in Germany the *Stettiner Zeitung* were to enunciate one theory with regard to the distribution of the German Army, and the German General Staff were to express another and contradictory opinion, no reasonable German would pay the slightest attention to the newspaper, or would entertain the least doubt as to which view was the correct one. Even in this country an opinion on the liquefaction of gases expressed by Lord Rayleigh or Professor Dewar, would carry more weight with the general public than a contrary opinion expressed by the *Keighley*

Echo or the *Brixton Journal*. But in both the above cases public opinion would accept the official as against the unofficial opinion, because all the world would know that in either case such an opinion was the outcome of close application, of long study, and of scientific methods. With regard to naval and military subjects in this country, however, no such presumption exists.

"It is no exaggeration to say that in a conflict of opinion between a newspaper or other critic on the one hand, and the official exponent of the naval or military departments on the other, the public very rarely give the benefit of any presumption to the official view. Very often, no doubt, the public are wrong, but their instinct is a correct one, and is due to the fact that they have come to regard expressions of opinion on naval and military questions as merely individual views, formed without reference to any particular study, and often destined to be contradicted the next day by another professional authority equally eminent in the Service and equally unqualified to come forward as a scientific and informed exponent of any body of doctrine.

"It would be unreasonable to blame the public for their want of belief, for undoubtedly the attitude is common to the political heads of great parties. Nothing is more common than to hear Ministers speak with indignation and annoyance of the errors into which they have been led by accepting the advice of naval and military officers, whom it has been customary to style experts.

"The fact is that a man does not become an expert in military matters because he wears a red coat, or in naval matters because he wears a blue one. If he has attained distinction in either Service it is probable that he is an expert in some particular department of his profession. He may be a good flag officer, a good gunner, a good frontier leader; but he may be any of these things without being an expert in the great science of war, or acquainted with the methods by which, under the complicated conditions of our Empire, preparation for war can most effectively be made.

"Ministers constantly depend upon the opinion of

professional men in respect of subjects of which their advisers have no expert knowledge whatever. It is no wonder, then, that disappointments are frequent. . . . Under these circumstances it is greatly to be desired that the country should be furnished with a body of men, who may in time become true experts, and that facilities may be given for the creation and growth of a body of opinion with regard to military questions, which will command respect, because it is the outcome of scientific method and research.”¹

And speaking on this subject in the House of Commons in the same year,² Oakeley urged upon the House the need that existed

“for some reinforcement of the intellectual equipment which directs, or ought to direct, the enormous forces of our Empire. I adhere to all I have said as to the value, even in their not wholly developed form, of the Intelligence Departments of our two great Services. But I feel that these questions, which are, and must be, outside the purview of either of those bodies, acting independently, cannot be dealt with even by the highest officers in either of the Services, or even by the highest political intelligences, merely by preliminary or casual examination. . . . The study cannot be made as a mere accident of professional life. There are great officers who have served, and are serving, this country enormously to its advantage. They have devoted their powers to the special avocations and duties which they have been performing. But many of them, and, indeed, I may say the great majority of them, have not been called upon to specialise in the study of this exceedingly complicated problem of the defence of the Empire, and the preparation and utilisation of its resources in the most economical and efficient manner. I should be false to myself if I were to deny that I believe there is room for a greater amount of preparation in advance with regard to the defence of the Empire. I am not at all sanguine that we can improvise in a year, or five years, or even in ten years, an organisation which will enable us to do all that we ought to do in this direction, but it is certain that unless and until we take the initial steps, the day of fruition will be indefinitely postponed. . . . Many of us have our own ideas as to how a commencement should be made, but until a commencement is made, we shall be no nearer the realisation of our hopes.”

In the eight years that have passed since this speech was made, and since this memorandum was written, though much has been done, much still remains to do, before our organisation for defence becomes the finely adjusted machine that the Empire requires, and has the right to demand.

¹ Memorandum, 1902.

² June 20th, 1902.

Great improvements have been made in the intellectual equipment of the Services. The real development of the General Staff of the Army, that has taken place in late years, has been watched and welcomed with the deepest interest and satisfaction by every one who has the interests of the Army and of the Empire at heart. The creation of the new Imperial General Staff is yet another advance recently made by the War Office. Every step thus taken has been a move forward in the desired path.

An increase and development of the War Staff of the Navy has lately been promised by the Admiralty, and we must hope that the initial steps having been taken we shall gradually see fulfilled the hopes which inspired reformers in 1902, and inspired the rebuilders of the Committee of Defence, and that we shall eventually possess a body of men trained, as the German General Staff is trained, by a lifelong and scientific study of the special problem involved in the defence of the Empire,—men who will hand down to their successors the gathered results of their study, and the learning that they have acquired; and will build up gradually a great tradition that will be available for future generations, and create an organised and perfected “system of offence and defence appropriate to the needs of this great maritime State.”

The question of Standardisation was one which, long before his time of office at the Admiralty, Oakeley often spoke of as one of the problems that had to be faced, and that had a most important bearing on many sides of the work of the Admiralty. He used to dwell on the waste of money, time, and material, which arose from the employment of all manner of irregular shapes and sizes in various kinds of constructive work in this country, and he often quoted the work done by Sir Joseph Whitworth, who first demonstrated the waste and inconvenience arising from screw manufacturers making various patterns of screws all slightly differing one from the other. Whitworth's proposal that an agreement should be come to for a “uniform size and pitch of thread for every diameter of screw and of aperture,” was met by much opposition. Firm “A,” it was contended, would not use the screws used by “B,” while “C” used a different screw altogether. He

got over the difficulty by producing the exact mean of the several patterns used by the most eminent firms, and his proposal was adopted with acclamation.

Another of Whitworth's favourite object-lessons furnishes a good popular example of our need for standardising in everyday life ; he used to point to a candle wobbling loosely in a candlestick, and only made firm by wrapping round it a band of paper, or to a candle which required to be scraped before it could be fixed into its place, and would ask why candlemakers could not agree as to the number of sizes required by customers, and why every No. 1 British candle should not fit correctly into every No. 1 British candlestick.

The iron and timber parts of buildings, girders, doors, door-frames, etc., used to move Whitworth to wrath by their diversity ; and he used to plead for the adoption of a number of English standards, maintaining that their adoption would give us the monopoly of the trades in every branch of manufacture in which this principle was carried into effect. An example of successful standardisation was furnished by the action of an association consisting of some of the principal railways of America, who, in order to cheapen the cost of rails and engines, adopted standard patterns for rails and parts of locomotives. The reduction of price that was thus made possible soon gave the American manufacturer an immense advantage in the markets of the world ; and the British manufacturers, who tendered for the supply of locomotives for the Indian and other railways, presently found their position gravely threatened by this competition.

From the first months of his tenure of office at the Admiralty, Oakeley took an active part in introducing into the Navy a system of standardisation, by which recognised and uniform standards of dimensions and tests should be adopted, which should regulate the manufacture of all material and machinery used in naval construction, and by which it would be possible to ensure the uniformity and interchangeability of parts in all naval work. He first raised the question in August 1907 in connection with the steering gear of H.M.S. *Cressy*.

" I cannot help feeling," he wrote ¹ at that time, " that the

¹ Diary and Memorandum, August and September 1901.

almost universal practice of other nations, which are successfully competing with us, sanctioned as it is by common sense, point to the desirability of standardising to a far greater extent than we do at present. . . . I still think that no adequate reason has yet been given against an absolute uniformity of pattern in the steering-gear of the six ships of the *Cressy* class. It is, no doubt, correct to say that in some instances it is desirable to test different types of appliances in the ships of a class; but I think it is hardly suggested that any such experiment is being made in the *Cressy* class, or that the variations between the steering-gear of the respective ships is due to anything but the failure to insist on uniformity. I believe that it would have been a great advantage if the fractured parts of the *Cressy's* gear could have been immediately replaced by utilising the parts supplied for another vessel of the same class, or by additional gear, which it would have been economical to manufacture as a reserve, had all the ships been identical in design.

"Many of the most important forgings in the machinery of our ships do occasionally break or get injured in some way. . . . Clearly, it would be an advantage if these things could be made interchangeable without injuring the designs of the engines. . . . It is true that standardising does involve exceedingly accurate workmanship, and to obtain such accuracy a considerable outlay on the first cost of machinery, etc., is essential; but it is just this accuracy which produces good machinery, and that it is worth paying for is proved by the example of many foreign firms, and now, happily, by some energetic and far-seeing firms in this country. . . . I cannot believe that the principles which apply to every other kind of mechanical work are not applicable to shipbuilding, especially to the engines and appliances of ships. If that be the case our shipbuilding firms will, in the long run, suffer just as many other branches of industry in the United Kingdom have suffered, from their failure to introduce scientific methods into their industry. . . . I believe the time has come when the Admiralty might wisely take the initiative in this matter, and by its example, and by its demands, stimulate progress in the direction in which it is so much needed."

In October 1901, he spoke on this question at the Institute of Marine Engineers. "Looking," he said, "at the machinery of our ships, and at all our great mechanical appliances, I cannot help asking if there is not room for more intelligence in the way of standardising these parts, and securing uniformity of their design. At this moment our greatest scientific body, the Royal Society, has made up its mind that we ought to do a great deal more than we do in this matter of standardising. A whole section of the British Association devoted itself this year to the discussion of the question, and was unanimous as to the necessity of further uniformity in our mechanical operations. In Paris, at this moment, there is sitting a body of men charged solely with standardising operations for the continent of Europe. But what do we find in this country? I go down to a great factory where a large amount of work is being done for the King's service. I find that the processes of testing the tensile strength of materials are so conducted that one set of tests is used for the Navy, another for the Army, a third for the Board of Trade, a fourth for one of the great railway companies, and a fifth for another railway company! . . . Again, there is no particular reason that I can ascertain, why we should have to send ships to sea, carrying big lots of tubes for boilers and condensers, all made to different standards of gauge. . . . We are carrying all this enormous quantity of truck about, because people have not put their heads together to see whether they cannot come to some rational agreement for the better advantage of our mechanical appliances all over the world. . . . I am sanguine enough to believe that the time will come when the government departments of this country will unite with the manufacturing industries and the great scientific societies, and will insist that we shall meet the competition of Europe and of the United States, by talking the same language that they talk, and utilising the same methods.

"I spoke just now of tensile tests. I find that there is in use a long list of these tests that are utilised for our own purposes, and at the bottom of the list I find *one* test for the whole of the Continental work. That means that the 'Tower of Babel,' so far as science goes, is eliminated from

the Continent of Europe, while we are talking a language which we can scarcely understand ourselves, and which others do not care to understand."

The immense influence and bearing that the question of standardisation exercised on the work of the Admiralty may better be understood when it is realised that the Government of this country was controlling manufactures to the extent of over forty millions a year, and that out of that amount the Admiralty controlled eighteen or nineteen millions. Anything, therefore, which tended towards the efficient supply of properly manufactured and properly graded materials, was of the deepest possible importance to the Admiralty.

His prophecy that the time would come when our Government Departments would unite with men of science, and with manufacturing industries, to insist upon scientific standardisation, was realised sooner than he had ventured to anticipate. The new ideas naturally met with some opposition at the outset, and difficulties were at first met with, but with the active help of the Controller of the Navy, Admiral (now Sir William) May, the difficulties were overcome, and the desired object was eventually achieved. Before he left the Admiralty he had the satisfaction of seeing the heavy gun mountings, the machinery of large battleships and cruisers, and the boilers of destroyers, made interchangeable. The number of types of torpedo boat boilers was reduced ; and eventually, to his own keen delight, he was able to sign an Admiralty order enjoining that, for the future, all material used in naval construction should be manufactured on recognised standard dimensions.

Meanwhile, he took an active part in forwarding the general movement in favour of standardisation. The Engineering Standards Committee, which was one of the most powerful engineering committees which this country has ever seen, had been formed under the Presidency of Sir John Wolfe Barry. It consisted of representatives of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers, of the Institution of Naval Architects, the Iron and Steel Institute, and of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. It soon became apparent that the movement was one of such national importance, and would confer such advantages on the trade of the country,

that the Government ought to give it support, and to contribute towards its funds.

After consultation with Sir John Wolfe Barry, Mr. Mansergh, and others, Oakeley drew up the outline of the statement to be made by the Standards Committee to the Government. At his request the Prime Minister received a deputation from the Committee, and he was enabled, in conjunction with its members, to induce the Government to make a grant of money towards the Committee's necessary expenses. He secured the appointment of members from the Admiralty on the principal sub-Committees, that were formed by the Standards Committee. He took special interest in the question of steel tests, and in connection with this matter, and with the Standardising question generally, received and entertained the principal representatives of the movement, who came over to this country from France, and from the United States.

"There is enough among my papers," he wrote, later in life, in a letter to his brother-in-law, Sir Arthur Rücker, "to show that I worked hard for this question, that I worked on true scientific lines, that I worked at first against much opposition, and that in the end I succeeded. The best reward I received, or could receive, was a letter which my friend and extraordinarily able colleague, Sir William May, was good enough to write to me before he left the Admiralty to take up his command. 'I think you will like to know,' he wrote, 'what the Engineer-in-Chief has just told me. He tells me that the machinery of the Navy was never so good as it is now; that, practically, what used to be square is now round. I think it fair to tell you this,' he went on, 'because you fought the battle against all the technical people, and you have been justified.' It was very pleasant to hear this, though, of course, all the credit for the execution of my ideas lies with Sir William May."

Before closing these chapters dealing with Oakeley's work in the Admiralty, and the subjects which were of special interest to him there, a few words may, perhaps, be said about the question of the victualling of the Navy, especially because, during the time that he was Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, the changes were made which

greatly altered for the better the existing scale and quality of the food supplied to the Navy.

All of us who have had any intimate acquaintance with French households of the middle class have been struck by the contrast that is presented between the menu and dietary of such a household in France and that of a corresponding family in this country. The Frenchwoman has applied her mind to good purpose to the problem, and in nine cases out of ten, her household is provided for in a manner incontestably more intelligent and more satisfactory than is the family of her English sister. A contrast quite as little flattering to our national pride would have been possible a few years ago, between the victualling arrangements of our ships and those of the French and some other navies.

Oakeley's interest in the question of the food of our sailors dated from the days, long before he became an official at the Admiralty, when he began regularly to visit both our own ships of war and foreign ships. He was greatly impressed by the clever planning and forethought that made possible the varied menu that is supplied to the lower deck of the French battleships. From officers and from men, he was always ready to get all the information he could as to the arrangements and working of the commissariat, which made such a result possible. The inferiority of many of the arrangements for the provisioning and dietary in the ships of our Navy, of our Mercantile Marine and of our Training Ships, was too striking not to be noted.

He was always learning about such things from all sorts and conditions of men ; and the personal experiences that he thus gained and the detailed knowledge that he acquired, gave him an added pleasure and keenness when he was able to assist in carrying out the important changes that were made, during his term of office at the Admiralty, in the whole scale and arrangements of the victualling of the Navy.

In the dietary of the boys in our stationary Training Ships he was also keenly interested. The visits that he paid to them were, as far as possible, unannounced ; and he timed his visits so as to see and judge for himself the quality and quantity of the meals that were served to the boys.

The cordial co-operation and assistance given by those

who were responsible for these ships, and of those who were responsible for the general victualling of the Navy, alone made it possible to carry out many of the reforms he desired to see accomplished. There are, no doubt, many further improvements still to be made. As time goes on, and as the standard of comfort and living of all classes goes up, the Navy standard must rise also. The best men will not be got for any service in which the standards of life are greatly inferior to those of the class from which the men come.

Oakeley's interest was keen in every improvement that was suggested or made in the conditions of life of both our soldiers and sailors. The details of barrack life and accommodation, and the arrangements for soldiers' messes and canteens were points to which he gave just as much thoughtful work later on. And the men with whom he worked to make the surroundings of soldiers' and sailors' lives more humane, and their food more wholesome and attractive, have written since his death from many distant parts of the Empire, remembering and acknowledging the help and encouragement that he was so ready to give.

CHAPTER XIII

“But what produced this state of things?” (the misery in our large towns, the congestion of the labour market, etc.).

“Free imports? I am not sure; I should like an inquiry; but I suspect free imports of the murder of our industries much in the same way as if I found a man standing over a corpse and plunging his knife into it I should suspect that man of homicide, and I should recommend a coroner’s inquest and a trial by jury. Of this you may be certain—that an impartial inquiry into this great question will put more hope into your hearts than any Reform Bill. . . .”

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

Fiscal Reform and Commercial Union with the Colonies—A Conversation with Mr. Chamberlain—The Growth of an Idea—*The Case for Enquiry.*

IN April 1903 the subject of our existing fiscal system, and its suitability or unsuitability to the needs of the time, were brought vividly and forcibly before men’s minds by the now famous speech that was made by Mr. Chamberlain at Birmingham. In this chapter, which deals briefly with the fiscal question and with Tariff Reform, I shall try to show something of the work and thought that, from a period dating sixteen years before this time, Oakeley had already devoted to the consideration of this subject, and to that of possible commercial union with our colonies. Some of the difficulties that he felt, and that he frankly expressed from time to time as he studied these questions, and the final direction in which his mind was moving, when the great impetus given to it by Mr. Chamberlain gave life and reality to the conception of fiscal reform, will be told here.

Problems concerning the incidence of taxation, and the comparative advantage and disadvantage of our system of free imports, were questions on which his mind was already much exercised, and on which he was already working, even when I first knew him. As early as 1888 he set before himself and carried out, a course of enquiry into the

statistics of the trade of the Empire, in order to find out, if only for his own satisfaction, whether it would be possible for this country to alter its fiscal system, to raise revenue on foreign manufactured imports, and to institute some form of preferential trade with our colonies. The conclusions that he then came to were that the increase in the growth of our colonial trade was, in comparison with our trade with the rest of the world, so slow and gradual that it did not justify such a change; nor did he believe that the feeling in the Colonies was favourable enough to make such a venture possible at that time. But he never abandoned the idea, and he spoke of it as a question which must be reconsidered and studied afresh with an open mind, from time to time, in the light of new knowledge and changing conditions. At the time that he was engaged on this enquiry, I remember our meeting at dinner my father's old friend, Lord Farrer, the permanent head of the Board of Trade, and a strong and very able exponent of orthodox Free Trade teaching. Conversation after dinner turned on the question of our trade relations with foreign nations and with our Colonies. Oakeley said that, as far as he could see, every prophecy that Cobden had ever made had been falsified by time, and that all the expectations and promises of the original teachers of Free Trade had come to naught; and added, with a vehemence that was very characteristic, that he could not look upon Free Trade as an unassailable dogma of political faith, but simply as a working arrangement which had certainly suited England's needs once, which he believed still suited her best, but which might very conceivably not continue to suit her always. I remember Lord Farrer's kindly concern when he told me of his real regret that my husband should be, as he feared, imbued with a heresy so dangerous and reactionary as was suggested by this conversation, and unsound on one of the fundamental principles of the Liberal creed.

A few years later he went back to the subject afresh, studying the Board of Trade returns from year to year. His deep interest in the Imperial side of the question attracted him continually to a reconsideration of the problem, and made him desire eagerly that some solution of it might

be found, even though he could not as yet see his way to any satisfactory answer.

In 1891, writing about a possible commercial union with the colonies to the *Chamber of Commerce Journal*, he pointed out the great difficulties as well as the desirability of some arrangement. "It cannot be denied," he wrote, "that the application of higher and still higher tariffs by continental and transatlantic nations, with the avowed object of excluding foreign manufactures for the benefit of the home producers, is the cause of much concern to manufacturers and business men, as well as to economists and politicians, and that an arrangement by which special advantages in trade may be given, in the markets of the Empire, to goods produced within it, is coming to be regarded as the best available remedy. . . . It is quite possible that if the resources of the Empire were to be fully developed it could supply its own wants both in quantity and kind . . . that there would be no need to draw upon other parts of the world for any article of commerce, and that within a measurable time her Colonies and dependencies might furnish full occupation for the factories of the United Kingdom. . . . But the fact must not be overlooked that although the countries of the Empire may be capable of producing the articles required and in the volume necessary to supply our markets, yet it is quite possible that if those countries are not the best suited for the purpose, the cost of production might be increased and a great sacrifice might be entailed upon the consumers of these articles by limiting the area of production to the Empire."

The relatively small volume of the stream of our colonial trade as compared with the main stream of our foreign trade was a difficulty that he never lost sight of. Nor did he ever forget or underrate the fact which at that time presented the greatest difficulty of all, namely, that to give any real preferential advantage to the Colonies, especially to Canada, we should have to face the taxation of food ; and, until a radical change in the opinion of the people of the United Kingdom on this point should be effected, he believed that no workable system of preference could be devised. This was the difficulty on which he dwelt when he spoke to a meeting of

the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee, pointing out three possible ways by which federation might come about :—

By a legislative or administrative federation ;

By a commercial federation ; or

By a federation for the defence of the Empire.

He dwelt on the difficulties that he saw in the way of the second method, and on his conviction that, without taxation of some food stuffs, it was an impossibility. And "though such union would be of incalculable advantage to the Empire," he believed that this objection was at that time an insuperable one, and placed it, for the time being, outside the range of practical politics ; and he urged that they should therefore rather devote their energies towards bringing about a federation in which all portions of the Empire should take their due share in an organised and joint scheme for its defence. He was probably right in his belief that, at that time, ninety-nine out of every hundred electors would have rejected the idea that, in order to give preference to Canadian corn and Australian meat, a tax should be imposed upon corn and meat imported into this country from other sources ; and this fact made the problem of colonial preference, for the moment, an insoluble one.

Nor had he begun then to question the assumption taught by Adam Smith and the old economists, that the duties that are put upon goods brought into a country are paid by those who consume those goods. He did not, until a later time, seriously question this "so-called" law, and in his writings and books at the time, although he often challenged other doctrines taught by Cobden, he assumed that this dogma was true and unassailable. A prolonged enquiry led him some years later to an opposite conclusion, and convinced him that this "law" was a fallacy, and was capable of being disproved by facts. In the meantime, however difficult and even insurmountable he felt the problem of commercial union to be, the subject could not for long be shelved ; for the stringent methods of Protection that were being adopted by other countries, and which were succeeding in driving our goods out of their markets, turned men's thoughts continually to the necessity of assuring to this

country permanent access to the markets of the Empire which it had founded.

In a letter written to me in June 1896 he records the following note of a conversation with Mr. Chamberlain which deeply interested him:—

“HOUSE OF COMMONS, *June 1896.*

“I had a long talk with Chamberlain the other night. He came and sat with me for a long time on the Terrace, and talked with great freedom about many matters, principally about federation and its prospects. He was very sanguine about the prospects of the movement, and thought it had never been so near. His great hope is Canada, which, as he truly says, is the most important of the Colonies, and—being a Dominion—the easiest to deal with. He fully believes that before the end of the year he will have a proposal from the Canadian Government (whichever Government it may be) for a conference to discuss possible Tariff Union. He would at once agree, and thinks that the other Colonies, or most of them, would come in.

“He is hopeful about a differential duty. I suggested that the facts made any preferential duty absurd unless food were included. He entirely agreed with this, but was quite prepared to include food duties, and, indeed, regarded them as essential.

“I said I thought that, when it came to concrete facts, it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to tax raw material. The tax would either be so low as to make no difference, which would be absurd, or so high as to make the profitable production of the exported manufactured article impossible.

“I mentioned cotton. Cotton, he admitted, could not be included. ‘Wool?’ Yes, wool must be. He did not think it would involve much loss to any one, and if it did, losses were inevitable in so great an operation, and the gains would be enormous. He did not by any means commit himself to the strict economic view that the consumer would pay the duty; probably, as in many quotable cases, the foreign importer would lower his prices, and abandon part of his profit in order to come into our market on any terms. He believed that even if Canadian Ministers were not favourable,

their people would insist upon taking advantage of so great an offer as soon as they realised that it was made.

"The frankness with which Chamberlain accepted the idea, and the enthusiasm with which he spoke of it, surprised as much as they interested me."

Later in the same year, from quite another side, the question of the incidence of taxation was brought into prominence by the Report of the Commissioners on the Financial Relations between Great Britain and Ireland. The conclusion of the Commissioners that Ireland was overtaxed to the amount of two and a half millions, mainly owing to the system by which our revenue is raised, drew men's attention forcibly to the whole subject.

In December 1896 he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Vere O'Brien :—

"24th December '96.

"There is going to be trouble over the Financial Relations Commission Report. . . . The idea of Ireland, '*qua* Ireland,' being overtaxed is baseless, and the idea that England and Scotland are going to tax themselves in order to subsidise Ireland is absolutely ridiculous. There is, however, a basis of fact at the bottom of the whole outcry. Ireland, as a poor and agricultural country, is overtaxed, owing to our system of indirect taxation being specially unfavourable to every portion of the country so situated. But what is true of Ireland is true also of Wiltshire, the East Riding, the north of Scotland, and so on. It is well worth considering whether we might not so readjust our taxation for revenue as to lighten the pressure of the indirect taxation, *e.g.* do away with the tea tax, amounting in Ireland to £500,000, and raise revenue instead out of manufactured articles that are imported from abroad. I am working this question up. . . . Please let me know which Robin thinks. . . ."

A month later he wrote again on the same subject :—

"I feel that after close study I am getting my ideas about the Report rather clearer than they were, but I am far from thinking that I see daylight yet. One or two points, however, I feel fairly sure about.

"Every effort to treat Ireland as a separate taxable entity is contrary to the intention of the Act of Union, is absolutely inconsistent with the continuance of the Union, and should be opposed by every one who has the interest of the Union at heart. . . . The unanimous finding of the Commissioners to the effect that Ireland is overtaxed to the tune of two and a half millions, or more, is in a sense true, and is capable of proof.

"The whole fiscal legislation of Great Britain during the last fifty years has been in the interests of the town and manufacturing classes, and has ignored, or been directed against, the interests of the agricultural and rural population.

"Ireland, being almost entirely rural and agricultural, has felt the evil effects of the British system with peculiar force. It is fair for Irishmen to say, 'Such fiscal legislation as you have forced upon us would be inconceivable from an Irish point of view. We should never have dreamed of such a method.'

"Again, the accepted method of raising half the Imperial revenue by indirect taxes upon what are practically the necessities of very poor people weighs most heavily upon a population which comprises a very large percentage of poor people. The subsistence scale of £12 adopted by the Commission errs, if at all, by being too low. In any case, the Irish peasant's taxable margin, after paying for subsistence, is exceedingly small.

"I think few people realise what an enormous *proportion* of this residue goes to pay Imperial taxes. Out of a shilling's worth of tobacco more than ninepence is tax. I don't quite know what a gallon of untaxed whisky costs, but the tax on it is ten shillings, and I imagine that the consumer of a glass of whisky pays at least twice as much in tax as he does for the article itself. (These figures I am working up.)

"Then the tax on tea, though not so heavy, is serious—something like 25 per cent *ad valorem*. The result is (I speak without having yet verified the figures) that of a pound spent on these necessary articles, something like twelve or fifteen shillings goes in taxes. And remember

too, that Ferdinand Rothschild practically drinks and smokes no more than Pat Murphy, but ten shillings out of Pat Murphy's pound is perhaps *half* Pat's available income for a month. The same thing could not truly be said in the case of Mr. Rothschild.

"But it is not really the very rich people who escape taxation. They are taxed more fully every year, and owners of land are undoubtedly cruelly overtaxed; but there is a large class of small shopkeepers and skilled artisans, and others with incomes under £400, who practically pay little or nothing to the State.

"But while all I have said is, I think, true, and demonstrably true, about the incidence of our present taxes upon Irish peasants, it is every word of it equally true with regard to Englishmen and Scotsmen in the same rank of life. There are millions of them, too, although they do not form so large a proportion of the population as their 'opposite numbers' do in Ireland. To suggest that Parliament should relieve the Irish taxpayer, and retain the burden on English backs, no better able to bear it, seems to me absurd, and I for my part would resist it tooth and nail.

"Still, this does not conclude the question. On the contrary, to my mind it only opens the real question, namely, Is our scheme of taxation satisfactory? I think that clearly it is not. It is supposed to be part of a Free Trade system. It is nothing of the kind. A country which raises £35,000,000 by crushing duties upon the importation of necessities of life has no business to talk about Free Trade.

"Why not, then, look the facts in the face? We have to keep up a tariff for revenue. Why in the world should we raise that revenue on necessities? Suppose we took off the 4d. a pound on tea, and halved the tobacco duty. Irish taxpayers would be relieved at once of taxation to the amount of £1,088,000.

"But we must get the money somehow—clearly. Then why not tax luxuries instead of necessities? Raw materials cannot be touched, but silks, clocks, manufactured woollens and linens—manufactured iron,—these and a score of other things could easily and justly be made to replace the loss

of revenue. And who would be the worse? No one, except certain foreign manufacturers who would have to content themselves with smaller profits than heretofore in order to retain our market. I believe there is really a great deal to be said for this plan, a great deal more, by the way, than I have said here.

"Note that by an automatic process the change would transfer the burden of taxation from the poor country to the rich one, and if a million stops in the pockets of the poorest class of taxpayers, that will be much better than handing over that amount to some new Irish Board with all its attendant evils. I am going to talk this matter over before the Belfast Chamber of Commerce when I go over about the 15th. . . ."

From the month of April 1903, when Mr. Chamberlain's speech to his constituents at Birmingham so startled the political world, this question of fiscal reform which had hitherto been of chiefly academic interest, quickly became the one political question that occupied men's minds, that they spoke of, and discussed whenever they met together, and that filled the columns of the press.

The substance of the conversation recorded by Oakeley in his letter of June 1896 shows the direction which Mr. Chamberlain's mind had even then taken. His long tenure of office as Colonial Minister had given him almost unequalled opportunities of seeing and judging the colonial aspects of the question, and his attitude was no doubt greatly affected by the deeply seated desire that he found among colonial statesmen for the establishment of closer relations with the Mother Country and for changes in the fiscal systems of the Empire, by which reciprocity of trade throughout the Empire might be made possible.

"I am deeply interested in Chamberlain's Birmingham speech," Oakeley wrote on May 17. "I should greatly like to fight under his new standard, for what I am worth. I would try and do so, if I felt sure that Chamberlain has looked ahead enough, and formed a coherent idea of how the campaign on which he wishes to start us can be fought with a reasonable prospect of success. I don't say it can't

be so fought—I hope it can be—and, perhaps, light will come, but the problem which has to be faced is an exceedingly difficult one. I speak with some knowledge; for nearly ten years ago I worked the figures out with great care, and with the aid of the Board of Trade. Though some things and figures have changed since that time, the general situation is the same, and the problem seems as difficult of solution as ever. It seemed to me then to be an *impasse*. However, there may be a way out . . . and if there be a way I shall find it, I think.”

On May 18 he notes in his Diary that he had had a “long talk with Mr. Chamberlain in the House, about his Birmingham speech,” and this is the first of many such entries, for in the weeks and months that followed, he gave himself up with characteristic energy to restudying the whole question. Board of Trade returns, books, papers, pamphlets were collected, studied, and noted indefatigably. The memory which enabled him to remember so clearly what he read, and the determined industry with which he faced the course of study and reading which he had marked out for himself as necessary, but which was entirely apart from, and additional to, all his ordinary work, seemed to those who were most with him at the time, a memorable effort and achievement. The Whitsuntide recess, which was spent with the Arthur Lees at Rookesbury, was devoted to the same study, and, when the session began again, Oakeley found in Mr. Leverton Harris, who was acting as his Parliamentary secretary, the ablest of helpers and collaborators, in his work of investigation.

By June he had begun to put his facts and figures together in a form which would be useful not only to himself but to his colleagues.

Beginning with the Blue books on foreign import duties, published by the Board of Trade, he made a careful investigation into the treatment that is afforded to British goods in foreign countries, and the exact effect of the Tariff wall which foreign nations had built up against the staple industries of this country. “There is no doubt,” he writes, as to the result of this Tariff wall. Duties imposed with the intention of excluding British goods have excluded

them, and duties imposed with the object of diminishing and disturbing British trade have diminished and disturbed it." He went on to examine the argument that Free Traders, then as now, were fond of impressing upon the country, that, despite Tariff walls, and despite the unfair treatment which our exports meet with, the trade of this country is increasing. The careful examination that he made into this point of the Free Trade argument is set out at some length in the pamphlet that he published soon after this time, entitled, *The Case for Enquiry*.

He compiled summaries of the principal articles of British produce, exported from the United Kingdom, which in the previous ten years had *increased*; and corresponding summaries showing the principal exports which had *decreased*. It was a statement which, when completed, was very far from being reassuring or satisfactory.

During this period in which the exports from Germany, and from the United States, had made enormous increases, our own export trade was practically at a standstill.

One fact, however, was especially noticeable. In nearly every case in which there had been a substantial increase of an article exported, it was found that that article was one which was exported principally, if not entirely, to British possessions, or to countries other than the great protected States, and as the enquiry progressed further, it became evident that had it not been for this large increase in trade with the Empire, the falling off in our exports, and in their value, would have been very large.

"If, then, it be true that, owing to the hostile action of foreign countries, the United Kingdom is losing its trade. If it be true that, while our markets are freely open to all the world, markets containing hundreds of millions of customers are closed to us. If it be true that, were it not for our increasing trade with our own Empire, our industries would be declining with dangerous rapidity; the thought must naturally occur—Is it desirable that this state of things should continue?—Is it inevitable that this system, which is admitted to be undesirable, should continue for ever?"¹ . . .

¹ *The Case for Enquiry*.

It was from this position that he started on the further course of his enquiry, making a study of the Tariffs of other countries, of their reciprocal and retaliatory duties.

Some of the notes that he put together were used in *The Case for Enquiry*; others were kept and were used as a basis for speeches, and for the further investigation that from time to time occupied him throughout the rest of his life.

The figures that had been tabled and summarised were placed freely at the disposal of any colleague or any member of the party who cared to use and study them. Mr. Leverton Harris reminds me of, and the entries of Oakeley's Diary, at this time, record, the long series of gatherings of friends who used to meet, almost nightly, in the House of Commons, in the room occupied by the Secretary to the Admiralty, to discuss with him these figures, and to talk over the whole question of Tariff Reform. At Mr. Balfour's invitation Oakeley, also, from time to time, laid some of the points of the case for fiscal reform, that specially struck him, before the Prime Minister, and he records in his diary notes of these conversations, and of Mr. Balfour's extraordinary quickness of apprehension and understanding of the bearing of the figures and facts laid before him.

On July 3rd he writes to his sister :—

"Among the subjects which are distracting the public mind, 'Tariffs,' of course, take the first place. I have been working very hard at facts and figures, and have now reduced the first part of my researches to writing, and indeed to print. I am correcting the proofs of a long compilation of facts and figures bearing on the question of retaliatory or reciprocal duties. When I have done this, and when time allows I shall try to complete the other half of the question; that which is concerned with preferential tariffs and taxes on food. I see Chamberlain very often, also A. J. B., and others of my colleagues, who are all, I think, interested in my figures. . . . With the principle of a retaliatory tariff, with the object of getting a larger measure of really Free Trade, I think you will be in sympathy when you have seen my figures and facts, which you shall have ere long.

“ If we had a good fighting lot in the House of Commons, things would go very fast ; for the ‘ Old Women,’ the regular Cobdenites I mean, are helpless against a brisk attack ; all their guns have been spiked long ago, and their fortifications look much more formidable than they really are ; only the attack ought to be sharp and pressed home.”

CHAPTER XIV

The Political Situation in 1903—The Unionist Party—Grave Illness—
The New Government—Secretary of State for War—Difficulties
of the Position—Secretaries and Fellow-workers—The Abbey
Garden, Westminster.

THE effect of the movement that had been initiated and was being pressed forward by Mr. Chamberlain was indeed great and immediate. Its full effects upon the Unionist party were more gradually felt.

We may, according to our political views, praise it as a great and necessary measure of evolution; or we may, as Unionist Free Traders will do, condemn it as a revolution, which was rashly sprung upon the Unionist party without due forethought, and which served to weaken the party. That it had for a time grave results upon the working of the political machine cannot be denied. The summer and autumn of 1903 saw the breaking up of Mr. Balfour's Government and the loss of some of the older leaders of the party. The new Unionist Government that was formed did not recover from the shock that had been sustained, or the loss of strength that had been suffered. A much greater lapse of time than has passed since 1903 will be needed before the whole history of the movement can be written, and before men will be able to judge what has been its ultimate effect on the country, and incidentally on the Unionist party. A change so large and fundamental is necessarily at the time a very disconcerting experience.

"Party leaders," says Mr. Graham Wallas, "can only preserve their political life by being in constant readiness to lose it. Sometimes they must even risk the existence of their party itself."

All the great permanent changes which have come

about in the affairs of our country have taken years to accomplish, and during the process of accomplishment the party machine has naturally and inevitably suffered, for the time. The Unionist party in the House and in the country suffered in this way in 1903.

The resignations of Sir Michael Beach and other senior members of the Government, on the ground of the divergence of view from the new fiscal policy, had shaken the cohesion of the party and disturbed men's minds.

There were, besides, other factors, quite apart from differences of opinion on the fiscal question, which were tending to weaken the Unionist Administration. The Government was, in the first place, suffering from the acute reaction which is the natural consequence of a protracted war—a reaction which all Governments, that have been responsible in the past for the campaigns in which Great Britain has taken part, have in their turn experienced.

An unusually long tenure of office, and the anxieties and responsibilities of the South African War, had further taken from the Ministry some of its early vigour and freshness, and had had the natural result of weakening the enthusiasm and zeal of their followers in the House of Commons and in the country. The crusading days of the Government were over, to use Lord Rosebery's expressive phrase.

In September Mr. Chamberlain resigned his office; in order that, freed from the ties and responsibilities that membership of a Government involves, he might devote himself wholly to carrying on his campaign throughout the country in favour of Tariff Reform. The resignation of the Duke of Devonshire followed, and Mr. Balfour had to set about the reconstruction of his Government, and practically to form a new Ministry.

Some weeks before the *personnel* of the new Government was announced, a crushing blow had fallen on Oakeley's life. The earlier part of his summer holiday had been spent in yachting. Towards the close of his holiday, and before returning to London, when riding a young and high-spirited horse on the Wiltshire Downs, he overtaxed his heart severely. The injury that was done was grave, and the heart never recovered from it.

He came back to London, to the prolonged and complete rest that was ordered. From the first moment, when the blow fell on him, he faced the facts with a great courage and patience, resolved that whatever was before him to be gone through, whatever had to be given up, the shadow should, if possible, never darken the lives of those around him.

Those who knew his enthusiasm for work, his intense and almost restless mental and physical energy, and his impatience of inaction, could alone realise what the sentence meant to him, and marvelled at his serenity and uncomplaining fortitude.

The time of rest helped him, and his patience and courage perhaps did as much for him as the complete rest did.

In October the invitation came to him from the Prime Minister that he should become Secretary of State for War; and the question had to be faced, whether his health could bear the strain of office, and whether he was justified in taking the risk to health and life that such a further strain would involve.

He did not underrate the grave difficulty occasioned by his impaired strength, or the other equally grave difficulties that would lie before him.

The weakness of the political situation, the shortness of the term that could be expected in which to accomplish the great changes that he believed to be necessary, were handicaps too serious to be overlooked. To have a fair chance of carrying into effect a policy of the magnitude that he knew was needed, a Secretary of State would require time, and also a strong party behind him, and neither of these would be his; but his courage and the hopeful temper of his mind would not let him dwell for long upon drawbacks. His heart was set, as soon as the chance of new work was given to him, of taking that chance, and of making a beginning at least on the path of Army Reform, which he had so long studied.

His ideas on the subject had been long and thoroughly thought out, and were already well known, not only to his colleagues, but to the public, from having been fully stated

in his books, in his speeches in Parliament, and in the press ; and he was eager, in spite of all drawbacks, to take up the task offered to him, his peculiar fitness for which Mr. Balfour so cordially recognised and acknowledged.

"The world brings odd changes," he wrote in a letter to his brother, Edward Arnold-Forster, who was at that time travelling round the world.¹ "Certainly, when I wrote last to you I never thought that within a few weeks' time I should be a Secretary of State, charged with about the most difficult and responsible piece of work that any British Minister can be called upon to perform. To say that I regret my promotion would, of course, be untrue ; a man must be more or less than human not to welcome added opportunities for useful work, added powers, and as far as those things count, added honours and position. But all the same this is not the moment, and these are not the circumstances, I would have chosen for the commencement of such a task.

"Parliamentary time must be short—may even be very short—the Party, on whose support I must rely, is torn by conflicting views, and though I do not care to dwell on the fact publicly, for good and obvious reasons, I have been left a *damnosa hereditas*, which might well tempt a legatee to renounce the succession. Then on the top of these troubles has come the breakdown in my health. I dare say E—— has told you that I have strained my heart riding a pulling horse, and that as a result I am, as the doctor puts it, 'winged for life.' I don't grumble, for I have been very fortunate, and indeed am very fortunate still in having a measure of health for current purposes ; but, of course, this is not a situation one would have chosen ; and it is particularly trying to me after so many years of active life to have to give up almost all forms of exercise, to think twice before I do anything, and to know that the most important part of my machinery may play me false any day.

"Nevertheless, don't think that I am downhearted or low-spirited. I have too many good friends in the world, and have too much interesting work to do, to allow of my pitying myself.

"As to my work, it is difficult ; but I not only think, I

¹ November 1903.

know, that the problem I have before me can be solved. I am even sanguine enough to believe that under favourable circumstances I might solve it. As it is, I can only hope to make a beginning, and shall consider myself very fortunate if I am able to do even that."

To his Sister, Mrs. Vere O'Brien.

"BELFAST, *November 10th*, 1903.

". . . I am sure you know well enough that the love and good-will of my dear brother and sisters is about the most valuable possession I have in this world, and that without it no success in life, small or great, would give me any real pleasure. Of course it is a real satisfaction to me to have succeeded as far as I have done in the profession to which I have devoted so much of my life. It is no small thing certainly to be a Secretary of State at forty-eight, and in an office so full of interest and so important as the War Office.

"I like being in the Cabinet ; I like being a Privy Councillor ; and, above all, I like treading in the footsteps of my Father, and doing that which, I know, would have pleased our dear Mother. I should be less than human if I didn't care, and care greatly for all these things. But the other side is there too, and don't let me forget it. The longer I live, the more I marvel at the want of wisdom with which this great Empire is governed, and the more miraculous does its continued preservation appear to me. The responsibility is tremendous, the power to accomplish good work is so small ; and, moreover, even if my powers were far greater than they are, the special problems I have to deal with might well prove insoluble. I don't think they need prove insoluble, mind you, but the difficulties are tremendous. Such weights to be raised, such little leverage to raise them, such a multitude of counsellors, and so little wisdom in their counsels.

"Then, too, I should like better health and more money of my own, both of them very essential things for a Cabinet Minister in a difficult office.

"However, considering the accumulation of blessings I

really enjoy, the affection of my dear people, the partial coming back of my strength, the support I get from many good men, and the delightful intellectual interest of the problems I have to face, I should, indeed, be a poor creature if I were to complain."

To his friend, Mr. Leverton Harris, who had acted as his secretary in Parliament for the past two years, he wrote shortly after this :—

"DEAR LEVERTON—I want to speak to you for your good. You are now an important member of the Tariff Reform Commission ; you have much work to do, and will probably have more. I think it not only possible, but probable, that this work will occupy all your time and attention. In that case you will have neither time nor attention to spare for War Office work. I want you, therefore, to feel yourself perfectly free, and to give up looking after me if you think you ought to do so. I think I need not tell you that I value your help greatly ; that I have learnt to depend upon it, and that there is no one in the House whom I would choose in your place, save under compulsion. At the same time I feel that when a Member has such an important and independent career as you have, and are likely to have, it is not fair to interfere in any way with his special work, or with his progress on a path which he has chosen for himself.

"So if you go, you will go with my blessing, but I am bound to say, not without a tear.

"Of course, if you don't feel bound to come to the conclusion which I think would be reasonable and natural, I shall be very greatly pleased ; and I think it fair to say that if you are able to stick to me for the coming session, you are likely to find the work of absorbing interest. I am making more progress than I could have believed possible a month ago, and if health be spared me, and if the Parliament lasts, I honestly believe I shall have been able to have accomplished something for which the country will have reason to thank me. And if this work be ever performed, I should like your co-operation. After all, there are many Tariff Reformers, but there is only one struggling Secretary

of State for War, face to face with big problems, and wanting all the help he can get in tackling them.

"However, it will be as it will be. So do whatever you think right, and don't bother too much about my woes."

Mr. Leverton Harris continued to act as Oakeley's secretary in Parliament as long as his term of office lasted, and to give him his invaluable help. Indeed, in respect of those who worked with him and for him he was singularly happy. Both at the Admiralty and at the War Office, he was assisted by men whose ability and devotion lightened his tasks, and made their co-operation a pleasure. "No one was ever better helped and served," he told me. At the Admiralty his secretaries were Mr. Evans and Mr. O. Murray. In Parliament for a short time Mr. Arthur Lee, and for more than four years Mr. Leverton Harris. At the War Office Mr. Arthur Loring, who filled almost a brother's place, was his principal private secretary; and first Colonel Shute, and then Major Marker, both of the Coldstream Guards, were his secretaries, and Mr. Turner of the War Office.¹ These men gave him far more than ordinary service. They brought also a readiness to help and a devoted loyalty, for which he could never be too grateful. Besides his secretaries there were many others who, seeing the straits of illness that often pressed so heavily on him, did all they could to lighten his burdens. It would be impossible to mention nearly all of these, whose kindness is, however, unforgotten; but it would be equally impossible for me to omit all reference to the unvarying kindness that was shown by Lord Roberts, the watchful consideration and helpfulness of Lord Donoughmore, and of Sir Herbert Plumer, who became a member of the Army Council, of Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, and the many members of the permanent War Office staff who with so much ability worked so hard for him.

The personal qualifications that the new War Minister brought to his task were warmly acknowledged by the press of both parties, and of these qualifications a soldier of

¹ Colonel Ewart was official military secretary to the Secretary of State, and when Major Marker left to rejoin Lord Kitchener in India shortly before Oakeley's time of office came to end, he was succeeded by Major Maude.

distinction, who had long and closely watched his work, writes :—

“Even Arnold-Forster’s opponents bore ungrudging witness to his personal qualifications for the position of Secretary of State for War at this particular juncture. His enthusiastic application to the study of Army problems, his indefatigable and personal examination of whatever was best and most up to date in foreign methods, his close inspection of both *personnel* and material in the great continental armies, and above all, his zealous love for all that had to do with the profession of arms, marked him out conspicuously for the office for which he was selected.

In a recent article the military correspondent of the *Times* has written : ‘The writer’s belief is that the greater number of our military mistakes in days gone by have been due to want of study of foreign systems on the part of men responsible for the higher administration of the Army. . . . The men at the top do not know foreign systems intimately, or at least have not done so until a very recent date. Yet unless an officer knows all the chief foreign systems well, and one at least intimately in detail, he is not competent to inspire reforms at home, because his education is unfinished.’

This intimate acquaintance with foreign systems Arnold-Forster had early acquired ; yet the possession of this rare knowledge was perhaps in the end almost a hindrance to his work. As is pointed out in the quotation from the *Times*, such knowledge has been exceptional in soldiers of the highest rank. When a civilian Secretary of State was able to speak with conviction, and from intimate personal acquaintance, of problems and matters which public opinion had dismissed as too technical for discussion, the man in the street declined to accept the opinion of the War Minister. His reforms were regarded with all the more suspicion according as the measure of knowledge which had inspired them exceeded that of some even of those military experts upon whom the more usual type of Secretary of State would perforce have to rely.”

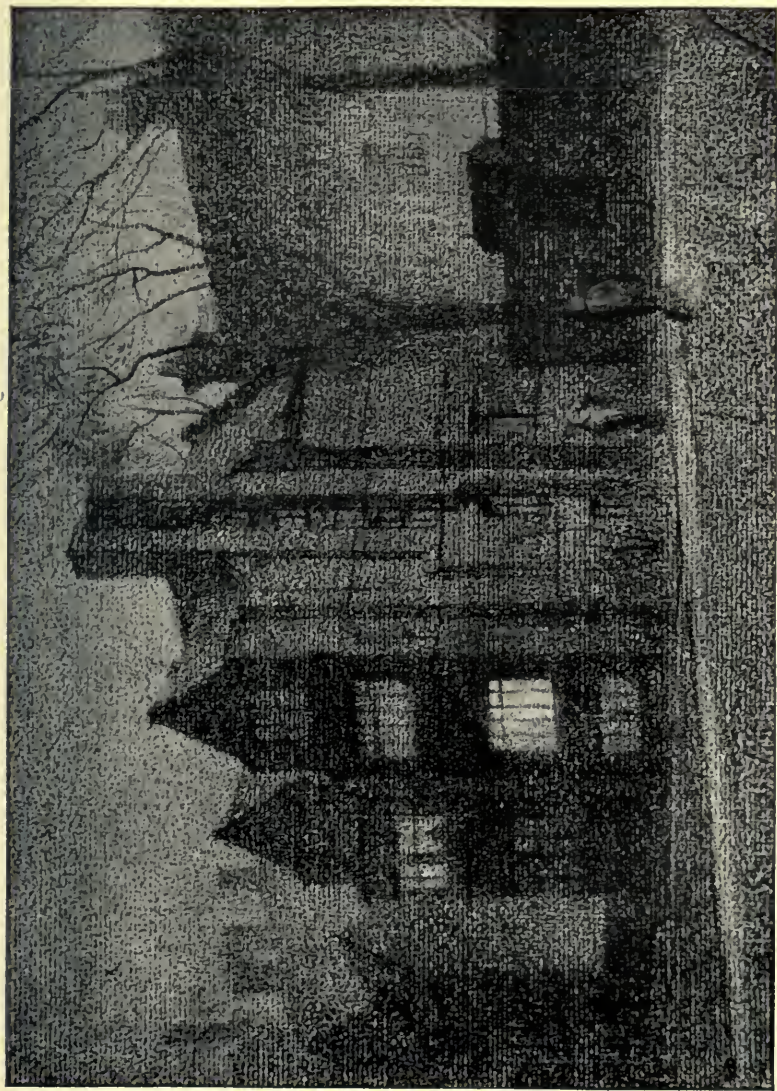
From this time onwards, on account of Oakeley’s health, and in order to be near to his work and to the House of Commons, we lived in Westminster, making our new home at 2 The Abbey Garden.

Great College Street, into which the door of The Abbey Garden opens, is one of the peaceful backwaters that are happily still to be found here and there in Westminster. On one side of the little street there are still some of the picturesque houses built two centuries ago. On its other side tall plane trees look over the old wall of rough grey stone which shuts in the ancient garden, once the Infirmary Garden of the Abbot and monks of Westminster.

In this quiet garden stands the house that was to be our home for six years.

It lies close under the shadow of the Victoria Tower, and looks across the lawn and trees of the Garden to the towers of the Abbey, to the rose window of its south transept, and to the long roof of Henry VII.'s Chapel rising above and behind the red roofs of the Canons' houses.

Through a low arched doorway the garden path leads into the Little Cloister, and thence through the cloisters to Dean's Yard and to the outside world. That daily walk, leading through the stillness and beauty of the cloisters, became one of Oakeley's constant pleasures; and if our steps led us in the opposite direction, down Great College Street, there was the river flowing close at hand, a perpetual pleasure to him, with the little wharves that he liked so much to watch, hardly more than a stone's throw from our door, with barges, red-sailed, passing up and down the river, and the noble outlines of Lambeth and the Lollards' Tower on the opposite shore.



NO. 2 THE ABBEY GARDEN.
From a drawing by Will Arnold-Forster.

CHAPTER XV

"To those who think we ought to have no Army I have nothing to say, except that I do not agree with them. But to every tax-payer I wish to point out that, while to have no Army and to pay nothing for it is reasonable, or to have a good Army and to pay twenty millions for it is reasonable; to pay twenty millions for an Army and not to get one is not reasonable nor to be endured."—H. O. A.-F.

Royal Commission on the South African War—Reforms urgently demanded—Economy a paramount condition—The Reconstitution Committee—Memorandum on the defects of the existing Army system—Memorandum on suggested reforms.

THE general political situation in 1903 has already been spoken of, but there were other circumstances, partly political and partly military, that were also of great moment to the Army, to the Secretary of State for War, and to the Department over which he was called on to preside.

In the first place, the War Office itself had only very recently been arraigned before the tribunal of a Royal Commission. The disappointments and humiliations of the South African War had deepened the general feeling that all was not well with the administration of the Army, and that the military arrangements of this country should be put on a sounder business footing. The Report of the Royal Commission did not lighten this sense of uneasiness and distrust; for, though its verdict was in some respects favourable, as to the military side of the administration, the Report on the whole was grave and unsatisfactory, and deepened the belief that serious change was needed. The more favourable portions of the Report were generally overlooked, and had but little mitigating effect on public opinion.

Comparisons had for a long time been made between

the systems that obtained at the Admiralty and the War Office respectively, and contrasts were continually drawn between the working methods of the two departments.

It was generally felt in the country and in Parliament, and it was insisted upon in the press, that the time had come when there should be a special enquiry into the whole question ; and that the administrative machinery of the War Office should be reconsidered and reconstituted.

The Army itself was still sore and angry at the undeserved attacks which had too often, during the war, been made upon it even by the responsible leaders of the Opposition ; and resented with bitterness the imputations and charges which had been made against its officers and men. The Army is an organisation naturally leaning to conservative habits of thought, and naturally slow to adopt new methods. It had only recently, and before the actual conclusion of the war, undergone a great constitutional change, by which it had been transformed nominally into six Army Corps. The term " Army Corps " was an unfamiliar one to the general public ; and after the evaporation of the first enthusiasm of pride in so unexpected a standard of military strength, the title gave a handle to those politicians who desired to see a great reduction effected in the land forces of Great Britain, and who pointed to the new nomenclature as an indication of the intention of the Government that our Army should vie with the forces of the great continental nations.

The demand for economy was even greater than that for increased efficiency, or for the reform of the administrative machinery. The demand for a great reduction in armaments which had been heard from time to time, but had during the war been expressed by a comparatively unimportant section, now gained in volume daily, and had become a valuable party cry. And it was not among an unpatriotic section, or among party politicians alone, that the necessity for reduction of expenditure was keenly seen and felt. It was realised also by most thoughtful people that if the naval standard of the country was to be maintained at the height at which it stood, we must continue to pay the " price of Admiralty " in full, and with little prospect

of its abatement. But, in view of this necessity, they desired that the whole question of our national expenditure on armaments should be seriously reconsidered.

On England's "shoulders immense, Atlantean" rested "the load, well-nigh not to be borne," of her great armaments. The weight of these might well become, and was indeed becoming, a burden almost more heavy and more costly than she could bear.

The task of harmonising the almost irreconcilable factors of rigid economy, on the one hand, with increased efficiency on the other, was the problem which the new Secretary of State was called upon to solve.

It had become clear, even before the end of the last session, that the attack of the Opposition on the administration of the War Office would be vigorously conducted.

Confronted by a task of such grave difficulty, the Minister responsible would require not only the backing of a united party in the House of Commons, but also the whole-hearted support of his colleagues in the Government, if he were to carry out any far-reaching measures of Army reform. But however clearly the Cabinet realised that changes were called for, and were inevitable, it was manifestly extremely difficult for those of his colleagues who had been responsible for, or had been closely connected with, the introduction of the last scheme of re-organisation to welcome with enthusiasm plans which must necessarily involve the abandonment of much that they had designed, and which, indeed, they had prescribed as essential for the Army.

A policy of reform would have no clear course made for it, and would have to make its way in spite of many obstacles, political and personal, as well as military.

There was, necessarily, a short delay, after his appointment to the War Office had been announced, before Oakeley was actually able to take up his new work. He was still kept to his room for a time; and it was not until a fortnight later that he was able to attend the ceremony at Buckingham Palace and took the oaths as a Privy Councillor and Cabinet Minister, and received the seals of his office. A short stay at Portsmouth helped his recovery, and during this time, in his enforced absence from his

constituency, his friends in Belfast re-elected him to his seat in Parliament, after a brief but sharply fought contest.

Almost the first matter that had to be taken in hand, when he returned to work, was the question of the administrative reform of the Department.

For this purpose the Government had already decided to appoint a small committee, which should advise them as to the best methods of reconstructing the machinery of the War Office. Only the actual composition of the committee had to be decided on. The Secretary of State considered that the presence of Lord Kitchener would have been of immense assistance in giving the enquiry sufficient weight and authority with the Army as well as with the general public; but the difficulties in the way of bringing Lord Kitchener back to England were insurmountable; and eventually the War Office Reconstruction Committee did not include an Active List General, but was composed of Lord Esher, Sir John Fisher, and Sir George Sydenham Clarke, who was then serving as Governor of New South Wales.

Meanwhile, on taking up his work in the War Office, he had, as his chief military advisers, the Commander-in-Chief, Field Marshal Lord Roberts; Sir Thomas Kelly-Kenny, Adjt.-Gen.; Sir Ian Hamilton, Qr.-Master Gen.; Sir Henry Brackenbury, Director-Gen. of Ordnance; Sir Wm. Nicholson, Director of Intelligence; and Sir Edward Ward, Permanent Under-Secretary; whilst Mr. Bromley Davenport was Financial Secretary in the House of Commons; and Lord Donoughmore, Under-Secretary in the House of Lords.

Besides the question of the reconstruction of the administrative machinery of the Department, two problems, both of them of great importance and urgency, demanded the attention of those who were responsible for the Army.

In the first place, the Treasury, no less than the general public, were pressing for increased economies, and for immediate reduction in military expenditure.

Secondly, it was becoming daily more and more evident that the existing system of enlistment for the Army was rapidly approaching the stage of a complete breakdown.

The system of three years' enlistment, under which the Army was being recruited, had been introduced by Mr. Brodrick, with the consent of his military advisers, in 1902, when it was decided that the whole regular Army should be enlisted for a term of three years only, instead of for seven years, with the colours. It was not overlooked that the Indian and Colonial drafts could not be furnished by these short-service men; but calculations, based on past experience, were considered to warrant the anticipation that, in the infantry of the line at least, the rate of voluntary extensions to seven years, among the men enlisted for three years only, would be very high; and would reach 75 per cent of the total.

Had this expectation been fulfilled there would have been no difficulty in providing the infantry drafts that were needed for India and the Colonies. But by November 1903 there was ground for the gravest doubts as to the soundness of these anticipations.

The rate of extensions in the infantry from three years to seven, so far from reaching the proportion of 75 per cent, was under 20 per cent, and in some battalions under 10 per cent. It will easily be seen how serious the position was. In the words of the Secretary of State: "It had been anticipated that out of every hundred men enlisted, nearly seventy-five would become available for dispatch to India or the Colonies, or, as old soldiers, to stiffen the battalions at home. But when it became apparent that out of a hundred men only ten, fifteen, or twenty, as the case might be, were likely to become available, it was impossible to ignore the danger of the situation."¹

In addition to this question of enlistment, the second question, that of retrenchment, was now equally urgent, as the Army Estimates were due within the next few months.

There was no difference of opinion as to the need for economy; but no such general agreement existed as to the direction in which it should be sought. Immediate and important changes could not well be decided on until the Reconstitution Committee, which was awaiting the arrival of Sir George Clarke from Australia, had had time to make

¹ Memorandum, January 1904.—H. O. A.-F.

its report, and until the Cabinet had agreed upon the general lines of military policy.

Even if such changes could have been made at once, the effect in decreased expenditure could not have been felt for some time, and the Army Board could, for the time being, only consider such economies in matters of detail as were feasible under the existing system. This was their chief work during November and December. By the end of the year it had become only too clear to the Secretary of State that, so long as the existing system remained in force, no appreciable reduction in the Estimates could be anticipated. No adaptation or alteration of details in the present system would avail to meet the demands of the Treasury, and at the same time to ensure military efficiency. He was confronted by (1) The failure of the three years' enlistment; (2) by the grave warnings of the Report of the Royal Commission on the War; and (3) by the pressing demands of the Government and the country for reductions in military expenditure. These were all overwhelming arguments for the necessity of a change in the constitution and organisation of the Army.

To carry out any far-reaching policy of reform, that policy must first have the support of the military heads of the War Office and of his colleagues in the Cabinet; and, as a necessary preliminary to obtaining that support, a clear statement must be set out showing the weakness of the existing state of things, and showing where and how the system had broken down. This Memorandum, dealing with the defects of the system of infantry recruiting and organisation, was drawn up by the Secretary of State, and was ready for consideration by the middle of January.

The chief evils to which attention was drawn were eight in number:—

1. To a large extent the First-Class Reserve, upon mobilisation, still formed a substitute for non-effective men serving with the colours, instead of being, as was intended, a supplement to the strength of the battalions.

2. No striking force was immediately available on the declaration of war. Nor could even a small expedition be carried out without calling out the reserves.

3. The three years' system of enlistment made the provision of foreign drafts a practical impossibility, unless the percentage of infantry willing to extend their term of colour service should be greatly increased.

4. The Militia showed a deficiency on its establishment of some 34,000 men. Its numbers had shown a tendency to decrease in the last two years. Employed as it was as a principal recruiting ground for the Army, no great improvement in numbers could be anticipated. In its present condition the value of the Militia for Home Defence was not very great, and it could not be compelled to serve abroad in time of war.

5. The linked battalion system for foreign service and for the provision of drafts had entirely broken down, since the number of the regular battalions serving abroad had exceeded that of the linked units which remained on home stations.

6. The system of regimental depôts that was in force was a source of administrative weakness and of unnecessary expense.

7. No organisation was provided to deal with the large number of immature and unfit men who would be left at home on mobilisation, their places having been taken by reservists.

8. There was a grave deficiency of officers in the junior ranks.

Other points that were dealt with in the Memorandum were the lack of employment for men discharged from the Army, the deficiency of numbers in the Brigade of Guards, the bad and insanitary condition of many of the older barracks.

This Memorandum was communicated to the members of the Army Board and to other leading soldiers, and met with cordial and practically unanimous agreement. Pending the verdict of the most competent military opinion on this statement of military shortcomings, he also prepared a second Memorandum, which was a confession of faith, or statement of his own personal view as to the lines on which remedies should be applied, and reforms carried out.

These constructive proposals were based upon certain general conclusions, which may be very briefly summarised as follows :—

The task of the Army is a threefold one. It has—

1. To supply troops on a war footing in peace time ; to garrison India, S. Africa, the Mediterranean, and other stations outside the United Kingdom.

2. To provide a small force in aid of the Civil powers in the United Kingdom in time of peace.

3. To furnish a very large army for service in time of war.

Whilst the two last-named duties are imposed upon all armies, the duty of maintaining a large force on a war footing in peace time, and of keeping that force mostly in tropical or subtropical countries, is imposed upon this country alone among all the nations of the world ; and, whilst the military preparations of other countries are primarily designed for the defence of the national soil, our Army is to some extent relieved of this duty by our insular position ; but, on the other hand, may be called upon to carry out operations across the sea on a large scale and at a great distance from its base.

The Army that serves as a peace garrison in tropical or subtropical countries must be a *Long Service Army* ; in the first place, because it must be a “grown-up” Army (the rule that soldiers shall not be sent to India until they are twenty years of age being based upon the hard teaching of experience).

The Army which in time of war is to supplement this foreign peace garrison must be a *Short Service Army*. By short service alone can large numbers of trained men be obtained. (A battalion which turns over its men every two years will produce in ten years nearly 4000 trained men, whilst the product of a battalion serving for nine years must necessarily be very small. A large reserve involves short service.) By the adoption of short service alone can any reduction of expenditure be ensured. The country cannot maintain a force of 500,000 regular soldiers with the colours in time of peace, without incurring a cost that will be prohibitive. But this number of men may easily be required in time of war. They must be trained,

officered, and organised if they are to render effective service in the field, and only by short service in some form can such a reserve force be furnished without undue expenditure.

The British Army is intended to serve the double purpose of garrisoning India and certain colonial stations in time of peace, and of conducting a successful campaign in time of war. Wherever that war is fought the Army must be ready to go. Where it will take place it is impossible to forecast. It may be on the Indian frontier; it may be nearer home, but it is most likely to be an overseas war. The Army which is to decide the issue must therefore be an Army which is available for service overseas, or it will be useless for the purpose for which it is primarily designed and principally required. The requirements of the country therefore are—**A Long Service Army for peace time, and a Short Service Army for purposes of expansion in time of war, and both Armies must be available in case of need for war overseas.**

In the Memorandum of the Secretary of State, the main lines of the reforms that he suggested were set forth. They involved the remodelling of the existing land forces into two armies.

The first, or Long Service Army, would consist of existing regular battalions for general service, charged with the duty of furnishing the garrison of the Empire at home and abroad; and of serving wherever required in peace and war.

The Second Army for Home Service only in time of peace, would be charged with the duty of creating a large reserve, capable of reinforcing the General Service Army in time of war.

The General Service Army would consist of Long Service soldiers enlisted for nine years with the colours and three in the reserve.

The men of the Home Service Army would be enlisted for fifteen months' dépôt and colour service, and six years in the First Class Army Reserve (with a further *optional* term in the Second Class Army Reserve). The Home Service Army to be a true Territorial Army, composed of

short service battalions ; such battalions to be quartered, as far as possible, within the districts with which they were associated.

This reconstruction would involve the disbandment of fourteen battalions of regular infantry (the third and fourth battalions of certain regiments). Of the remaining 142 battalions, 112 would form the General or Long Service Army. Thirty would become part of the Home Service Army. Of the 124 battalions which composed the militia, sixty were to be invited to transfer their services to the Home Army, bringing the strength of this force up to ninety battalions.¹

The disbandment of the remaining militia battalions, many of which were greatly under strength, was proposed, but an alternative suggestion was left open for consideration, namely, that a further twenty-two of these battalions might be added to the Home Army, bringing up its strength to the same number as that of the General Service Army, viz. 112 battalions.

Two armies would thus exist, closely connected, in peace time, the one to provide for the police work of the Empire, the other, a short service force, to build up the necessary reserves of trained men for mobilisation for war.

It is unnecessary here to go into the details of the other changes by which it was proposed to remedy the evils of the existing *depôt* system, the lack of employment for time-expired soldiers, and the shortage in the Guards' Brigade, and to make provision for a striking force.

The proposals made in the Memorandum dealt with these defects, and suggested remedies for them. The infantry strength, which would eventually be formed under

¹ Some modifications of these figures were afterwards made to meet suggestions made by the Army Council. In the scheme originally drafted by the Secretary of State, a short service term of fifteen months' training was proposed for the Home Service Army. Of these fifteen months, three were to be passed at a large *depôt*, and twelve with the colours. If this period had been acceptable from a military point of view, it would have had great advantages ; it would have involved only a short extension of the existing period of Militia training, and would rapidly have created a large reserve. But almost every military authority was opposed to the term as too short, the general consensus of military opinion being in favour of two years ; and in deference to military authority the two years' term was adopted.

the scheme, would amount to a total of 365,000 men—an increase of fully 65,000 men.

The scheme, as first propounded in the Memorandum, dealt only with the infantry. But it was pointed out that should the general principles be approved, it would be a simple matter to work out similar proposals for the other arms, in a relative proportion to the infantry strength, and to imperial requirements.

It must be understood that this Memorandum was not written for the purpose of dictating a particular solution of the problem; its author was the first to allow that the question might be dealt with in various ways; but he submitted these suggestions tentatively, and always in the hope of obtaining other and better plans from soldiers and statesmen, who had had an inside acquaintance with the Army system in the past. At the same time, his own proposals embodied the conclusions to which twenty years' study of continental army systems and British methods had led him.

The one indulgence which he asked for in his critics was, that when they criticised his solution they should not be unmindful of the narrow limits within which he was confined by the necessity for economy, and by political considerations. Any alternative proposals must comply with the same exigencies that had governed his own. At no time did he claim that his Army scheme approximated to the ideal, but only that, subject to the bounds imposed by financial necessity and by the possibilities of recruiting, it gave a reasonable approach to the Army at which he aimed, and which was requisite for the military protection of the Empire.

Before entering further into the details of these proposals, it is necessary to refer to the first result of the work already achieved by the War Office's Reconstitution Committee. The first instalment of their Report was now completed.

Their recommendations met with the immediate approval of the Government, and wrought a complete change in the administration of the department.

In place of the Commander-in-Chief and the Army Board, who had hitherto exercised military control in Pall Mall, an Army Council of four military and three civilian

members was constituted under the Secretary of State for War. An Inspector-General was also to be appointed to perform those duties of inspection which had hitherto been vested in the Commander-in-Chief.

Even now, after a lapse of over six years, the full effects of these changes can hardly be gauged. The immediate and practical result can best be stated by saying that, at a time when the weight and prestige of the most experienced soldiers was needed at the War Office to make it possible to carry out the necessary changes, it found itself without the responsible heads of its departments who were soldiers of distinction on whom the Army itself placed reliance.

In their place a new Council was formed, the military members of which had had little or no previous experience in War Office administration, and who though distinguished soldiers, were not well enough known to the Army to command its unquestioning confidence.

The Committee had, however, laid great stress upon the necessity for having new men to inaugurate the new administrative system which they had recommended, and though the Secretary of State felt natural anxiety concerning the change, and realised that he would be losing the support of great experience and knowledge, he agreed with the decision that the new system should be worked from the first by men who were free from all responsibility for War Office affairs in the past.

By February 26 the Esher Committee completed its further task, and the final Report was then presented to the Prime Minister.

A suggestion was made about this time that this Committee should continue its existence as a separate consultative body for the consideration of the further questions of Army reform. To the Secretary of State and to many others, however, it was at once obvious that a Committee which had recreated the administrative machinery of the War Office, and which had brought into being the new Army Council, would be so powerful as necessarily to overshadow that Council. The situation would have been an impossible one for the new Council, which would not have had the weight or the power that was essential for its future usefulness.

The thanks of the Government and of the Army to the members who had worked so indefatigably on the Committee, were expressed by the Secretary of State, in a letter which voiced the general feeling of admiration for the rapidity, the boldness, and wide scope of their labours, and for the ability of their Report,—that Report having been already practically adopted in nearly all its particulars.

The official connection of the members of the Reconstitution Committee with the affairs of the War Office thus came to an end. Sir George Clarke was very shortly afterwards appointed to the important post of Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence.

Meanwhile, the appointments to the new Army Council had been made. The military members were: Lieut.-General Sir Neville Lyttleton, Chief of the General Staff; Major-General C. W. Douglas, Adjutant-General; Major-General H. Plumer, Quartermaster-General, and Major-General Sir J. Wolfe-Murray, Master-General of the Ordnance.

As soon as the selection of these officers was notified, the Memorandum on "Defects in Infantry organisation," to which reference has been made, was sent to them for their perusal. Their attitude towards this Memorandum was so much in harmony with his own views, that the Secretary of State was encouraged to place before them his second Memorandum, in which his proposals for reform were detailed. At the same time this second document was also circulated among his colleagues in the Cabinet early in February.

The Government had already decided that the proofs that had been submitted of existing defects in organisation were convincing; and were of a gravity that called for immediate action. For the Government itself the position was no easy or simple one. Some of its members had been closely connected with the previous changes, from which great improvement in the efficiency of the Army had been anticipated.

For Oakeley it was, naturally, a somewhat ungrateful task to be obliged to dispel these anticipations. Loyalty to the Army forbade a softening of the indictment. In order to be able to make the Army efficient, the defects which were so seriously injuring its efficiency must be made clear.

No half measures, he was convinced, would avail, and a fundamental change in the system was required. As the War Office was in course of reconstruction, so the Army itself must be fundamentally reorganised to enable it to perform its proper *rôle* in war.

The Memorandum on proposals for reform had met with the approval, amounting in many cases to enthusiasm, of almost all the senior officers to whom it had been submitted.

An influential War Office Committee, after preliminary investigation, pronounced it to be "a logical and comprehensive scheme based on sound general principles," and this encouraged him to hope that the Government would find itself able to accept the main outlines of his proposals.

They were, however, unwilling as yet to commit themselves to any immediate acceptance. In the peculiar condition of affairs there were strong reasons for their deliberation.

Only a comparatively short time had elapsed since they had adopted the Army Corps system. Two members of the Government had already occupied the position of Secretary of State for War. This fact, and their intimate connection with systems, which must necessarily give place to any new organisation, naturally predisposed the Cabinet to enquire very closely, and with especial care, into the merits of any new proposals, and into the amount of military support that they were likely to receive.

When they were first laid before Ministers the final Report and detailed conclusions of the Esher Committee had not yet been completed, and it was clearly desirable to await their recommendations before being committed to any new Army policy. Moreover, the new Army Council had only just held its inaugural meeting, and some expression of their opinion on a matter so vital to the Army would be necessary.

The difficulty occasioned by the upheaval in the War Office administration had begun to make itself felt. The proposals for reform had to be brought forward in an interregnum between the two *régimes*. Under the old *régime*, or under the new when in full working order, the proposals would have been considered and accepted by the Depart-

mental Chiefs of the War Office, before submission to the Cabinet. As matters stood in February 1904, although the Secretary of State might have the support of the old War Office Board for his proposals, they could not be presented with the collective endorsement of the new Council, and they came before the Government as the personal work of the Secretary of State for War, although with the individual approval of members of the Army Council who had seen them.

The Government, however, fully recognised that in one direction at least, that of the infantry drafts, the existing system was rapidly breaking down, and that, if the Army were to discharge even its peace-duties, some drastic measures were of immediate necessity. They were, therefore, not unwilling to allow the Secretary of State to commence his task, but it was urged upon him that, whatever action was taken, it should interfere as little as possible with the susceptibilities of the auxiliary forces, and the expenditure involved must be confined within strictly defined limits.

So formidable had the attack of the Opposition become on the charge of "inflated expenditure on Armaments," that at this moment it was of even greater importance to the Government to be able to show considerable reductions, present and prospective, in the Army Estimates, than to be able to guarantee the greatest increase in military efficiency.

Oakeley had hoped and expected to be able to announce the outline of his proposals with the introduction of the Estimates, early in March, but he fully recognised the justification for the delay. Confident that the broad lines of the policy suggested would eventually secure its adoption, and that the details of the problem would be left by the Government to the decision of the Army Council, he turned to the more pressing work of his Department, a Committee being, meanwhile, appointed by the Cabinet, under the presidency of Mr. Wyndham, to investigate the financial side of the question, and to report on the balance between the financial position of the proposed Army Scheme, as compared with that of the existing system.

The month of February 1904 had witnessed the out-

break of hostilities between Russia and Japan. Deeply interested as Oakeley naturally was, in the initial naval engagements in the roadstead of Port Arthur, he was yet more closely concerned with the military occurrences of the war. Military attachés had to be appointed to the Russian and to the Japanese field armies. He was fortunate in being able to secure the selection, first of Sir William Nicholson, and later of Sir Ian Hamilton, to represent the British Army.

With the appointment of the Inspector-General, the appointments to the chief military posts at the War Office were completed; H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught accepting the position, to the great satisfaction of the Army and of the Secretary of State.

CHAPTER XVI

"No economy is effected by endeavouring to span a hundred-foot gap with a ninety-foot bridge. An army that will win is worth paying for; an army which will not win is worth nothing at all—a fact which is too often apparently forgotten by so-called economists. But that the total of Army Estimates is enormous, and ought if possible to be reduced, is a matter of common agreement."

H. O. A.-F.

Army Estimates in 1904—Postponements of the Secretary of State's statement to the House of Commons—Resulting in motion for adjournment of the House—The Militia—A compromise, July 1904.

THE chief work of the Secretary of State for War now lay in the preparation of the Army Estimates for the next twelve months; Estimates which had to deal not with the Army as he hoped to see it, but with the Army System that he had inherited at the War Office. It can never be an easy task for a Minister, who has to frame and present large Estimates, to meet the criticism that they will encounter, even when he is personally responsible for the conditions that he has to defend. In this case he worked with the more care and anxiety, because he was responsible for the justification and explanation of work that had been done by his predecessor in office. A supplementary estimate, which was necessitated by the continuance of hostilities in Somaliland, further complicated the financial work of the department.

The Army Estimates were introduced in the House of Commons on March 7. In opening his speech he said:—

"My belief is that we are standing at the parting of the ways with regard to the administration of the Army, and I have seen nothing during the short time I have been brought face to face, officially, with the problems of the

Army, to alter my belief that changes of considerable magnitude are necessary if this country desires to obtain the Army which it requires, and the Army which is appropriate to its needs. If I thought that these Estimates which I present to-day represented the last word upon War Office policy I certainly should not be standing in this place ; but it is because I have the confident hope that it may fall to my lot, and if I have to abandon the hope that it may fall to the lot of some hon. member equally solicitous for the welfare of the Army, to produce Estimates upon a totally different system, that I now ask the consideration of the House to these Estimates as interim Estimates only. . . .”

Later in the speech full recognition of the necessity for economy was expressed :—

“I have not abandoned the view I have long entertained and often expressed, that the capacities of this country to spend money on its armaments are not infinite, and that if we are to have a readjustment it must be a readjustment in the sense of first making perfect our naval defence, even though to some extent we are compelled to provide on a greater scale of magnitude than other Powers. Therefore the advocate of economy will find me to be a very sympathetic listener. Of course I have my own ideas as to the way in which economies may be best effected. I think the first rule we have got to lay down is this, that true economy consists in making a machine that will do our work, and that anything short of that is a waste of money, and that anything in excess of that is extravagance.”

After a reference to the expenditure which had been rendered imperative by the provision of a new weapon for the horse and field artillery and an improved rifle for all branches equipped with small-arms, attention was drawn to the existing condition of the Militia and the Volunteers :—

“I wish I could tell a satisfactory tale about the Militia. I am sorry to say that circumstances do not permit me to do so. The condition of the Militia, both as regards officers and men, is profoundly unsatisfactory. . . . I believe the Militia has long been regarded too much as an adjunct of

the line. It has had no independent existence. I believe the rule which is common to any body or corporation applies to the Militia; and that if you desire to restore it to a satisfactory condition you must make it feel that it is an all-important element in the defence of the country; that every battalion has individual existence, and that the prestige of the officer and the man in a Militia battalion is what he earns for himself and for his battalion while he is in it. I believe it does not pass the wit of man to give to the Militia those conditions of service which I think are calculated to make it the force we all agree it can be made. . . . At the present moment I am also convinced the Volunteers are not fulfilling to anything like the extent they ought to fulfil the duties which the country hopes they may fulfil in time of war. I do not believe that that is to any large extent the fault of the Volunteers. I believe it is because we have not yet thought out our problems. We have not yet learned to apply the special conditions of each service to that service. We have not realised what part we want each branch of the Army to take in time of war; and until we do all these things the Volunteers will continue to be what they are now—a body capable of producing a magnificent force, but which would be misdescribed at the present time if we said it was a force of a truly military character, with a quality corresponding to its numbers, and with an organisation corresponding to the zeal and energy of those who compose it.”

“I confess I do not view with equanimity the condition of the Army at the present time. I believe that, important as it is that we should have this Army Council, and that we should have these changes in the constitution of the War Office, it is still more important that we should carefully examine the condition of our Army to see whether it is really capable of performing those tasks which, whatever our politics, whatever our views may be, we fear may be imposed upon it on some occasion which may be, but we all hope is not, near. We have at this moment a great asset in the number of trained soldiers in this country, but that asset will not last for ever. It is being diminished

every day. I have been compelled to examine the constitution, organisation, and composition of our Army. I am not satisfied that we can continue with advantage under our present organisation, or that we can do it without grave risk to the fortunes of this country."

The total amount asked for in the Estimates was £28,900,000.¹

The immediate criticism of the Opposition was directed to the fact that the recommendations of the Esher Committee had been adopted, without Parliament having been given the opportunity of discussing such fundamental changes in Army administration. A further vigorous attack was made on the financial situation and prospects. A speech made in 1903 by the Chancellor of the Exchequer was recalled, in which the confident hope had been expressed that considerable reductions of the normal military expenditure would be effected within two years. But at the same time there came from many quarters cordial recognition of the difficulties under which the Secretary of State laboured, in that the task was laid upon him of defending Estimates belonging to a system for which he was not responsible, and the approaching end of which had been foreshadowed in his speech.

The difficulty under which Oakeley suffered in introducing the Estimates and in the discussion that followed was the difficulty that was inherent to the situation. As long as the Government had not definitely accepted the general principles of the reform proposals, he could not announce the forthcoming change of policy with regard to the Army Corps and linked battalions system. All he could do was to lay before the House Estimates for twelve months, making it clear that during that time great changes were imperative, but without being able to give any indication of the scope of those changes.

The condition of uncertainty which was produced in the

¹ It is of some interest to note that these Estimates, if the cost of the Somaliland Expedition and the artillery rearmament are deducted, tally almost exactly with the amount, £27,760,000, of Mr. Haldane's Estimates for 1910-11, but that the latter Estimates deal with a regular Army diminished by nine battalions, and with every home battalion put on a reduced footing.

country and in Parliament by this protracted time of waiting was shown by a "question" asked in the House on April the 14th, when Mr. Black asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether "the Government had resolved to abandon its scheme of Army reform in order to adopt *en bloc* that put forward by the Reconstruction Committee?"

The Prime Minister replied, "The hon. gentleman appears to think that Army reform and War Office reform are incompatible alternatives. That is not the view of His Majesty's Government. We hope to deal with both."

This indication of the intention of the Government to proceed with Army reform was followed by a statement by the Secretary of State for War. "The Army Corps system," he said in answer to a question in the House, "would not be continued. There would be substituted for it another form of divisions not based on the Army Corps system."

The enquiry made by Mr. Wyndham's Committee into the financial effect of the new proposals had now been completed. The report was favourable to their cost as compared with the expenditure under the existing system. A few minor alterations were suggested. In some matters of detail also the Army Council had suggested modifications that they thought should be made. With revisions made to meet these requirements the scheme was now ready for consideration, and was submitted again to the Government on April 19.

To Miss Arnold-Forster.

"HOUSE OF COMMONS, S.W., 19.4.'04.

"DEAREST FRANCIE—Here am I sitting on the bench with Austen and Victor Cavendish. An individual named M—— is speaking, and is making, or trying to make, the speech which he would have made if the Chancellor of the Exchequer had made a speech altogether different from the speech he actually did make. This is rather complicated, is it not? But it represents the facts. How can I spend the time better, or more effectually dissipate the ennui caused by the eloquence of M—— than by writing to you?

"I am making real progress, I think, with my Army scheme. Of course I know exactly what I want to do; but

the trouble is to persuade other people. I believe I am going to do this. I have already got all my soldiers to back me, and I don't doubt that I shall carry the Cabinet. Then it will only remain for me to convince the House of Commons and the country. If I don't do that it will be my fault. Perhaps I shan't, but I am willing to take my chance, and if I fail, I fail. I am beginning to think that I shall get the time I require, not to complete my work, but to make a beginning. We shall get through the Budget all right, and if we don't have a fall over licensing, I really believe I shall get my chance.

"Austen has made an excellent speech, under very difficult circumstances. He has been much and deservedly praised. He tells me that his right hon. friend the member for West Birmingham has declared himself to be very well satisfied, which he has reason to be.—Ever your loving brother,
H. O. A.-F."

And a few weeks later he wrote to the same sister :—

"I know exactly what I want, and how to get it; but that is not enough. Not only is there an immense amount of complicated detail work to be done before the main principles can be recommended effectively to the House and to the public, but I have to carry with me many divergent interests and to reconcile many conflicting views.

"I don't despair; far from it. I am full of hope. But time is short, and I have no right to be over sanguine."

To his sister, Mrs. R. V. O'Brien, he wrote in May :—

"My work goes on, but not so far or as fast as I could desire. Perhaps I expect more than is reasonable, for of course the problems I have to deal with are very complex. All the same, I am sure that the longer we postpone coming to a conclusion, the more difficult will it be for us to do any real good. Of course the early return of Lord Curzon, and the forthcoming Report of the Auxiliary Forces Commission are good excuses for delay, though personally I don't think either event need really alter our views. Still, I hope for the best; and I am quite clear that unless I do get a chance of changing the Army system before the end of the session,

I shall refuse to be responsible for the administration of the Army.

"As for myself, I don't know what to prophesy. The state of things in the Army is so serious that I imagine my Government must let me loose (if they don't, I shall cut myself loose). But if, and when, I do make my statement, I am under no illusions as to the possible result. I want to deal with the whole problem ; nothing else will do any good."

The military members of the Army Council had, with one exception, expressed their strong approval of the general principles of the Memorandum, but the long delay before its publication was beginning to produce its natural results. Partial statements as to its tenor, often greatly distorted, and often very inaccurate, were discussed in military circles and clubs. Themselves new and untried members of a new and untried Council, some of the military members began to realise that a share of responsibility for changes which might possibly be unpopular would have to be borne by themselves. The weakness of the Minister's position in having to rely upon this newly organised and untried body for military support for his policy became apparent.

The Council as a whole now "approved" the scheme, and definitely sanctioned its submission to the Government. But some of the military members were anxious not to take the definite personal responsibility that would be involved if it should be presented to the Government as having received their full consent. So long, however, as no such personal responsibility was imputed to them, the Secretary of State was authorised to put forward his proposals as being a scheme the general lines of which his military advisers approved, and to claim their full support for the statement that "existing conditions could no longer be maintained with safety."

The combination of the linked battalion system with enlistment for three years' colour service had indeed completely broken down.

Out of a draft of 100 men embarking for India, concerning which a question was asked in the House at this time, no less than 97 were serving on a three years' engagement

only, which meant that in most cases their term in India would be less than a year. Widespread uneasiness was felt in the Army. Oakeley was naturally deeply anxious to be allowed to make a statement as soon as possible in the House, and to outline the general scope of the changes proposed. Such a statement would allay the general anxiety and uncertainty, and would put an end to the rumours and misrepresentations that were doing the Army so much harm. But before he could make this statement a definite decision by the Government had to be made. In their discussions of the scheme the Government and Treasury were still confronted by the financial exigencies, and would not commit themselves to the scheme unless satisfactory assurances could be given that the total sum of Army expenditure under it would not exceed a definite sum. This sum the Treasury desired to fix at an immediate limit of £29,000,000, to be reduced ultimately to a limit of £27,000,000. How was it possible to make the required reduction? To make it by reducing the regular Army beyond the very limited reduction that was contemplated under his scheme was a solution that the Secretary of State felt it impossible to admit, and on this point he was strongly supported by the whole Army Council.

Even had he been willing to consider this alternative, the Russo-Japanese war and the political situation in the Far East would have put it out of the question. For the Indian authorities had had to make large demands for further reinforcements of troops in view of possible complications in Mid-Asia.

The only other conceivable method of arriving at the desired result involved bringing within the scope of enquiry and action the position, cost, and military value of the auxiliary forces. Oakeley, on his side, was prepared to undertake that the eventual military expenditure of the country should not exceed the limits to which it was desired to bind him, conditionally on his being given a free hand to deal with the auxiliary forces, within the lines of his scheme, in such a way as to attain the necessary financial result.

Any proposals, however, which affected the condition

and future of the auxiliary forces aroused powerful feeling and opposition on both sides of the House ; and this opposition the Government was most anxious to avoid. The Report of the Commission on the auxiliary forces—presided over by the Duke of Norfolk—had been long awaited by the Government, who were anxious to learn the nature of its recommendations before they announced the lines of their future military policy.

The Report, when it finally appeared, was of great importance and interest. But it was at once evident that its recommendations were not such as to make any easier the task of a Government which was obliged to lighten the cost of armaments. The grave verdict was pronounced that, "Your Majesty's Militia and Volunteer forces have not at present either the strength or the military efficiency required to enable them to fulfil the functions for which they exist." And though many detailed recommendations were made that would, it was hoped, tend to make them more fit for war, every one of these recommendations entailed additional expenditure ; and the Report closed with a weighty advocacy of the principle of compulsory national training.

"Here am I," Oakeley wrote to his sister, in June, "in a sea of troubles, not all of my own making. My statement has been put off—to the Greek Kalends, perhaps ; I know not. At the last moment there comes on the top of me the Report of the Auxiliary Forces Commission ; and every recommendation in it means money. Then, again, every one seems to be my master, except myself. *Servus servorum* : that is the motto of a War Minister nowadays, and no one to kiss my toe, withal. Moreover, no triple crown ! They bid me economise and reform. If I could do as I please I could accomplish this feat ; but every man who says 'Economise,' cries 'Hands off' directly I touch his particular preserve. The Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the Indian Office, the Army, the Militia, the Volunteers,—it is the same story all round. 'Retrench in the abstract, but do not cut off a penny in the concrete.' If they would only 'give me the run of my teeth' for one hour, I could solve the problem !

However, I don't give up yet. I know exactly what I want, which is more than any of the others do ; and I shall die fighting, you will see.

"Don't think, though, that I have quarrelled with my colleagues. They are really heavenly good to me, only they don't understand. They don't realise yet that if you are to save expense on the Army you must give up, not that which costs nothing, but that which costs something.

"I feel myself a trustee for the Army. I know if I don't do the thing some one else must, and may do it without knowledge or sympathy. That is why I intend to fight this thing out if I can. I have been in bed for the last two days, having a sort of Louis XIV. levee. It has done me good, for it has rested me ; and I never work so easily and well as I do when I am on my back. I got up at a quarter to eight, last night, and went off to the dear Savile Club, where my kind comrades gave me a 'Dinner of Honour'—a true delight to me, coming quite spontaneously from my friends, my fellow-workers, and my equals. The room was crammed, and more would have been there if there had been places for them. I mark the day with a white stone. I said a few words which were true, and which expressed my feelings ; and my hearers liked them."

"It seems much too long since we met," he wrote at this time to his younger sister, Miss Arnold-Forster ; but get away just now I cannot. What a day may bring forth I do not know. Only this I do know, namely, that I am not content to go on administering the Army on the present lines ; that I think I can mend it ; and that, finally, if I am not allowed to try my hand, in a very few days I shall give some one else the chance. I am quite cheerful, and complain of nobody ; but I do know the business, and I cannot stand by and see the Army go to pieces while I am responsible for it.

"However, I still hope, and, indeed, am rather inclined to think that all will yet go well. However, the next few days will decide, and for either fate I am prepared. I mean

going, and doing nothing, or stopping, and doing my best. Stopping, and doing nothing, won't suit me at all."

The statement that the Secretary of State was so anxious to make to the House, and which had been promised for June 16, was again postponed week by week. A deputation of service members of Parliament met him, and urged the Government to dispel the uncertainty that hung over the future of the Army. He could only beg them to defer passing judgment on the policy of the Government until he was allowed to place it before them as a whole.

On June 28 the dissatisfaction of the House came to a head; and the adjournment was moved, to call attention to the alarming deficiency in the drafts required for India and South Africa, and the confusion and uncertainty prevailing owing to the prolonged delay in the announcement of the Government's scheme of Army reorganisation.

In proposing the motion Mr. Beckett said, "The Government cannot fail to be aware that there is, on the part of the House, and the nation, a universally felt and generally expressed desire that we should know—and know quickly—what is going to be done with our Army; and, if I may venture to do so, I would warn them, in no unfriendly spirit, that they cannot thwart or set aside this desire without serious consequences to themselves. The state of our Army is an urgent and pressing question—a question which at the present moment far transcends in its urgency any other question that is before the public, and which is causing the gravest possible anxiety to those who are behind the scenes. It is a question that cannot be trifled with, or ignored, or postponed to a more convenient season."

After referring to the recruiting difficulty, and the change in the terms of enlistment from seven to three years with the colours, which had been introduced by the last Secretary of State for War in connection with the Army Corps system, as the cause of the deficiency in drafts, Mr. Beckett referred to the question of the long-promised reforms in the Army.

He traced the acknowledged necessity for drastic re-organisation from the report of the South African War Commission, and showed how the Government had created the War Office Reconstruction Committee to direct the preliminary work of War Office reform. On that it had been assumed that the Government would produce their own "clean-cut plan and system" of Army reform.

"We were led to expect by the Prime Minister that a definite statement would be made on Thursday, June 16. That statement was postponed, and, judging by the reply made by the Prime Minister yesterday to the leader of the Opposition, we are left entirely in the dark as to when this statement will be made, or whether it will be made at all during the present session. Had the Prime Minister given a pledge that the statement would be made within a reasonable time, I would not have moved the adjournment of the House."

After the motion had been seconded by Sir J. Dickson-Poynder, the Secretary of State for War, in the course of his reply, said, "The hon. member who proposed and the hon. member who seconded this motion have pointed out that the adoption of the three years' system of enlistment has had a most prejudicial effect in connection with the drafts for our Army across the sea. It would be idle for me to pretend that this system has been to the advantage of our service of drafts to India and the Colonies. I agree with my hon. friend that this matter is a very grave and very important one. I do not want to say more about the origin of this system, than that it was one which was forced on the Government at the time by the circumstances which existed at the time. The Government had to deal with a falling market, and my right hon. friend¹ had to consider by what immediate step he could provide for the necessities of the nation. . . .

"Now if I am asked what is my conclusion upon this matter, I would say that it is that the system is not one which can be continued with advantage. It is perfectly clear to me that when we consider what are the real needs of the Empire, we cannot indefinitely continue a system

¹ The Right Hon. St. J. Brodrick.

which exposes us to uncertainty in regard to the organisation of our Army. The remedy for the moment is to find the drafts as best we can, and to relieve ourselves from the difficulty as well as the circumstances allow. I think I have met the hon. member's question fairly and openly. My reply is that I am as concerned as he can be as to the possible consequences of the continuance of this system, and I am as convinced as he can be that it is our duty not to attempt to tinker with the system, but to alter it so that we may be free from the uncertainty in advance as to the prolongation of the period of service.

"My hon. friend spoke of the desirability of some pronouncement being made by the Government with regard to their intentions in respect to the Army at large. He suggested that it is my duty to propound a remedy for the evils which I, in common with himself, believe exist in the organisation of the Army. I admit the soundness of that proposition, and I agree with his conclusions. I should like to make it quite clear to hon. members that whatever they may think about the times and seasons of my statement on the subject, there is no question at all about the indefinite prolongation of the present system.

"We feel that there are difficulties connected with the present system which can only be met by an alteration. Therefore, I beg hon. members to dismiss from their minds the belief that there is any conflict of opinion, or can be any conflict of opinion upon this question. What we are face to face with is not having to make up our minds as to whether a change is necessary or desirable. Many things have happened which have confirmed some of us in the belief, and created the belief in others, that a change in the organisation and administration of our Army is absolutely essential. By, I believe, an almost universal desire, a change has been made in the constitution of the War Office. We have reconstituted the whole staff of the War Office, and if hon. members knew the complexity of this problem, I think they would not be so ready to say that we have been dilatory. . . .

"It may be said with some fairness that we have been given a good deal of time, but there have been some new

facts imported in the situation, which have gone some way to complicate it.

"I think the problem itself is clear. We have got to get an Army suited to the needs of the country and the Empire. We have got to have an efficient Army in the first place. That is an absolutely dominating condition. The second thing is to make very large reductions in our Army expenditure. I believe, when I say that, I am representing the opinions of nine-tenths of the Army members of this House. I believe there is almost absolute unanimity in this House, and a very large consensus of opinion out of the House, that we must have large reductions in our Army expenditure. . . .

"The resources of this country are limited. Quite apart from that fact, I believe there is a new and better school of thought dictating the arrangements of our offensive and defensive forces, which would rather contribute any additional expenditure to the Navy rather than the Army. And there is a third problem, which I do not say rises superior to, but to a certain extent dominates, the other two.

"To reduce the cost of the Army you must reduce its strength, and when you come to reduce the strength of the Army you must reduce A, B, C, D, E, or F—something already existing. It is an addition to the problem which I have to attempt to solve ; that the reductions must be such as will commend themselves to the general feeling and general acceptance of this House, will make our Army efficient, and at the same time will be consistent with sound economy. I do not despair at all. I believe with my hon. friend that the problem is soluble. If I did not believe that I should not be here. I am quite well aware of the indulgence with which I have been treated, not only by my hon. friends but by the House.

"The House may be perfectly sure that I shall not overstay my welcome. I am as convinced as my hon. friend can be that this question of the Army is one of absolutely paramount importance, and that it must be dealt with, and, for the reasons he had given, and for many other reasons, drastically and soon. I am sanguine enough to

believe that I can suggest a remedy which shall be fully acceptable to the House and to the country.

"If I did not believe that, I should certainly not trespass farther on the goodwill of my hon. friend. But I will ask him, if he will give me that indulgence, not to press me unduly, and at any rate to remember that the problem is complex; and if he finds me fail, to remember that I shall be as conscious of the failure as he can be. I shall, at any rate, not ask him to accept anything which I do not believe to be in the true interests of the Army, and which does not conduce in every respect to its best administration."

Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, who followed, acknowledged that the Secretary of State had spoken throughout in a tone which commanded the sympathy and respect of the House, while further testimony was borne to the way in which his frankness had disarmed criticism. No less cordial was the recognition of his colleagues in the Government of the tact with which he had dealt with a very delicate situation. The debate on the motion cleared the air, but it did more, for it had shown the Government that public opinion was roused, and that their indecision on the main question of Army reform could not be further prolonged. They must come to some agreement which would enable the long-promised statement of policy to be laid before the House.

Early in July the Government had arrived at an agreement in favour of the policy of the Secretary of State, except upon one material point. This point was the question of the Militia.

It is hard at the present time, when the Militia has been completely wiped out of existence, to realise how strenuously its friends on both sides of the House fought to prevent any modification being made in the conditions of the "Old Constitutional Force." The Militia, as it then was, consisted of 124 battalions. Forty of these the Secretary of State proposed to transform into regular battalions of the Home Service Army. Sixty battalions were to be retained as Militia, but on an improved standard as regards numbers and efficiency.

Twenty-four Militia battalions only, which were greatly

under strength, would have ceased to exist. These were the revised proposals submitted in April 1904. It is instructive to compare this suggested fate with that which has actually overtaken the Militia under his successor at the War Office.

The whole of the Militia in the United Kingdom has disappeared, and in its place seventy Special Reserve battalions have been created, which have no separate corps existence in the sense traditional in the Militia, for they can never go on service as individual units. The only direct link between the Special Reserve battalions and the old Militia exists in the rapidly disappearing contingent of former Militiamen who are completing their engagements in the ranks.¹

The Special Reservist gets six months' training in place of the fifteen months or two years' continuous service, which would have been given to the Home Service Army men in forty units of the Militia. And yet it should be noted that the strongest military objection that was raised in 1904 to the proposed Home Service Army, was that fifteen months were quite inadequate, and two years barely sufficient to render men capable of meeting continental troops in the field.

That any proposals to alter the constitution of the Militia would be opposed was evident, and the Government was no longer in the position, and no longer had the requisite driving power, to carry through a large scheme in the face of any serious opposition. Its fighting days were over, and its safety seemed to lie in following the line of least resistance and exciting the least possible amount of controversy.

The deadlock at the beginning of July seemed almost complete; for if the policy of dual long and short service armies were to be carried out, as the Government had now decided, the necessary reductions of expenditure could only be made in one of two ways—(1) By further reductions of regular troops, or (2) by dealing with the Militia on the lines that have been indicated.

At the last moment a compromise was made. The Secretary of State was to be permitted to make his state-

¹ See pp. 351, 357, 368.

ment in the House, to explain the full scope of his policy, and to set forth what, in his own view, was the most feasible method of dealing with the Militia question.

On the other hand, he was to make it clearly understood that in speaking of this solution of the Militia problem he was stating his own personal views, and to give a pledge that the constitution of the Militia should not be altered in accordance with this view, unless and until the consent of Parliament were given, and that he could carry with him the approval of the country.

Meanwhile, it was decided to disband all such units of the Militia as did not come up to the standard of War Office requirements, and to take steps, if possible, to improve the efficiency of the rest of the force.

The compromise thus made involved a sacrifice so grave on the part of the Secretary of State that he was most unwilling to agree to it, and it was but natural that, looking at the matter from the point of view of his interest and reputation, those nearest to him should have eagerly desired his resignation from office at this juncture.

He himself ardently desired either to press forward his proposals as a whole, and to carry them, if possible, through Parliament, or to be allowed to resign an impossible task; but the reasons which were urged on him, and which overbore his own considered judgment, were strong ones. It was pointed out that, though it might be possible to carry the Militia proposals safely through the House, yet, should an adverse vote result, the fate of the Government would necessarily be involved; and even more imperative considerations than the immediate future of the Army or Militia had to be weighed.

The political situation not only in the Far East, but in Europe, was in an electric and disturbed condition, owing to the Russo-Japanese War. The renewal of the agreement between Great Britain and Japan was within a short stage of completion. The Parliamentary session was drawing to a close, and if the Government could maintain its position until the prorogation, the safety of these supreme interests would be assured. There was no doubt in the minds of his closest friends and fellow-workers that he made at this time

a sacrifice which would almost certainly be misunderstood, and for which he would pay a heavy price. He made it, believing it to be a necessary sacrifice, and that his duty, for the moment, lay in the avoidance of a Parliamentary crisis. But he did not, for a moment, disguise from himself that his high hopes were over, and that the compromise made had jeopardised most gravely the fulfilment of his great ambition, namely, the creation of an Army, efficient for war, which would satisfy the needs of the Empire.

CHAPTER XVII

Speech, July 1904—Work and holidays—Summer 1904.

ON July 14 the Minister for War made his promised statement in the House of Commons. In opening his case for the reform of the Army he explained his attitude towards the proposed changes:—

“I want the Committee to understand that this is not a case in which a Member of Parliament, who has been, so to speak, accidentally tossed into a position of responsibility and importance, desires to signalise his arrival at that position by making a stir, by changing old things to new, and making alterations for the sake of alteration. I want them to believe, and I think I can convince them, that whoever sits on this Bench, and has this responsibility, will find confronting him exactly the same difficulties which confront me.

“I am asking the Committee now to listen to me, and if possible to sympathise with me, because the Army is going through a period of great danger; and if the Army is going through a period of great danger, this country is also going through a period of great danger.

“I am not moving for the sake of moving, but because I honestly believe that the circumstances of the case absolutely compel some change.”

The evils and shortcomings of the existing conditions of military administration were clearly shown. The results of the system of three years' enlistment were stated, but it was also pointed out that the introduction of that system was not the outcome of caprice, as had been suggested by the Opposition, but that it had been forced upon his predecessor by the exigencies of a war emergency.

The other defects to which reference has already been made were dealt with, and the measures by which it was proposed to remedy them were briefly outlined. Finally, the difficult and controversial matter concerning the future of the auxiliary forces was laid before the House.

During the remainder of his tenure of office it became a frequent charge against him, in certain circles, that he was hostile to the Volunteers, and that his proposals aimed particularly at the crippling, if not at the destruction, of that force. It is only fair to recall the passages in which he dealt with the Volunteers in this first exposition of his scheme.

"I come now to the Volunteers. I believe the Volunteer force contains the best material we have in the whole Army, . . . and if we are wise we shall make the very best use we can of that material. Whether we are making the best use of it at the present moment is a thing about which I am not so clear."

Later in his speech he detailed his intentions for the attainment of this object:—

"I say that within the Volunteers we have the most magnificent material that this country can furnish, and I want to utilise it for the defence of the country.

"I am going to ask the Volunteers to submit to the same sacrifice as I ask the Line to submit to—and ask the Militia to submit to—that is a sacrifice in numbers.

"I ask leave to reduce the establishment of the Volunteers to 200,000 men. I have just read to the Committee the report of the Commission which states that large numbers of the Volunteers are inefficient, and are practically not available as soldiers. We ought not to have these men in the Volunteer force at all."

The existence of two different categories of Volunteers in the force, and in almost every individual corps was recognised.

"There are men who want to give more time and are able to give more time, either because they are not fully occupied, or because they are young; and there are those who are willing and capable soldiers, but whose avocations will not permit them to give so much time. The result is

constant complaint against the 'screwing-up' as it is called of the War Office Regulations.

"We desire to recognise that state of things, and what we desire to do is this. We desire to give a much larger grant to the Volunteers.

"We desire, with the assistance and counsel of Volunteer officers, whom we are most anxious to consult in this matter, to give effect to that separation which we know exists.

"Personally, I should like to take 60,000 Volunteers and make them into a Field Army, require of them all that we think they can give, put a large grant at their disposal, and make them keep up their full complement of properly trained officers, and their full complement of non-commissioned officers.

"I should like to put the other 120,000¹ upon an easier basis of requirements, retaining their connection with the force, sharing all its social opportunities, proud of their position, and ready, I am certain, in time of war to take their place in the force, with the experience and knowledge which they have acquired.

"That I believe to be the right and true solution of this volunteer problem."

In these words it will be difficult for the most prejudiced critic to discover any touch of hostility to, or even any lack of sympathy with the civilian soldiers whom he was always so anxious to assist along the path which led to real efficiency.

And yet, as a soldier wrote concerning this particular point, "to no part of Arnold-Forster's scheme was the opposition so bitter or sustained, as to that which aimed at the improvement of the Volunteer force. Subsequent events have only proved that it was not the actual measures that were proposed by Arnold-Forster, in what many soldiers maintain was the best scheme of Army reform which has ever been put forward—that were the cause of the deadlock into which the movement for reform subsequently drifted. It was largely because those

¹ Under this scheme the Volunteer establishment was to be reduced to 200,000 men, 180,000 of the existing strength to be immediately absorbed, and the force to be gradually raised to its full establishment of 200,000.

measures were part of the policy of a declining administration. From within the Government they were inadequately supported by colleagues who were afraid of the effect of vigorous proposals upon the precarious popularity and position of the Government. From without they were opposed with all the force of party antagonism exercised by an Opposition which looked forward to the prospect of approaching power. The voice of the Army itself—the body immediately interested was one of general approval.”

But the feeling of the Army could be officially expressed only through the Army Council, and the Army Council was not yet strong enough to express itself with absolute independence of external influences. In the last five years we have seen the disappearance of the force which objected, successfully in 1904, to a process which would have retained its existence, and increased its vitality at the expense only of factors acknowledged to be inefficient.

Its individual elements have been readjusted into a new organisation which has, perforce, submitted to a “screwing-up” process far in excess of what was then proposed. The obnoxious medical test, the *voluntary* submission to which was the feature of those proposals to which the Volunteers most strenuously objected, has now become obligatory on all recruits for the Territorial force. The attestation, in place of enrolment for the Volunteer force which the Minister for War in 1904 was warned would mean the destruction of all voluntary military service, has been accepted from the first by the Territorial Army.

To return to the speech of July 14, the question of the Militia remains to be dealt with.

“Now I come to the question of the Militia. I have already described to the Committee what the position of the Militia is. It is very grave indeed. Nineteen thousand men a year are passing out of the Militia to the Line. If they were physically fit I think twice that number would pass through. In some battalions as many as seven out of the eight subaltern officers are in the Militia, in order that they may go into the Line. Therefore you will understand that at present the Line is living on the Militia.

“There are many hon. friends of mine in this House who

have belonged to the Militia, who have done splendid work, and I am the last to deny that to a great extent the Militia difficulties have arisen from the unwise treatment they have received in the past. But the difficulties of the Militia are greater than that; they are inherent in the situation. So long as the Line depends upon the Militia, so long as the country districts are depleted as they are now depleted, the Militia difficulty will remain.

"I must tell the Committee what my own view would be with regard to the best treatment of the Militia, both in the interests of the Militia and of the Army as a fighting machine. My belief is that the proper course to take would be to give the Minister of War *carte blanche* to take some seventy battalions of the best Militia, to unite each two battalions together, and to turn them into Territorial battalions; to make them shake hands with the Line; to put them into the great centres of population, and make them the Territorial battalions of this country.

"I believe nothing would be more popular in this country than if I were allowed to put down in each of our county towns one of these Territorial battalions,¹ which would use up the whole of the best material of the officers and men in the Militia at the present moment. That is what I believe is the correct solution of this Militia problem. I believe that is the real way out.

"But I have not been so many years as I have in this House without knowing that with a great national force of that kind no Minister—not even a powerful Minister, let alone a tyro like myself—can effect a change like this unless he has with him the goodwill and conviction of Parliament and of the nation. I commend that statement to hon. members and to the country. I do not propose to ask the House now to give any opinion. On the contrary, I propose to occupy the coming autumn in consultation with the Militia officers, and with those who are best qualified to voice public opinion, and in ascertaining if they desire to fall in with this proposal, which I believe will be both popular and valuable. But, let the Committee remember this. They have asked me to economise. If they desire to keep up

¹ Of the Home Service Army on a two years' enlistment.

the whole of the Militia on the basis on which it now exists, they will have to pay for it. That is the plain black and white of it. If they desire to keep up the whole of the 124 battalions of the militia with their artillery and engineers, on their present basis, they will have to pay for it. We will do our best if it is the wish of the House and of the country to maintain all the Militia that are capable of being maintained ; but we ask leave at the same time, as those responsible for making a fighting force for this country, to raise the standard of the Militia. And I go farther. We must be given permission to cut off from the Militia those units of it which are plainly redundant to our requirements, and show that they are not capable of recovering the ground which they have so unfortunately lost.

"With regard to the Militia, I am in the hands of the House and of the public. If the Committee insist and the country insist upon the retention of the Militia, as it at present exists, they will pay £1,800,000 for the privilege. If they allow me to do what I believe to be the best thing for the efficiency of the Army, they will very largely reduce that expenditure."

In all that he said upon this vexed question it will be seen that he loyally adhered to his agreement with his political colleagues, and respected the apprehensions of his military advisers. In all the various phases of the proposed reforms he refrained from involving the soldiers on the Army Council in that personal responsibility which some of them were desirous of avoiding. In the particular case of the Militia, he made it clear that the proposal which he put forward was a personal and tentative one, and that it would not be proceeded with without a preponderant support in Parliament and in the country.

In one passage only did he make a passing reference to the impossible position of a Minister who was committed to departmental retrenchment and reform, and yet was constantly checkmated by supporters of diverse interests, and by counsels of timidity.

"I speak as a Minister with many advisers—and I suppose there has seldom been a Minister who, from divergent and contradictory points of view, has received

so much advice as to what he ought and ought not to do. There has been practically a universal consensus as to the duty of reducing expenditure, but there has been an absolutely universal condemnation of any proposal to do anything which involves the reduction of expenditure. That is the difficulty that I want the Committee to understand and to help me in."

The Opposition could not fail to mark the note of personal responsibility which Oakeley had been forced to adopt in speaking of the Militia proposals. A phrase in a speech of the Leader of the House of Lords a few days later, which conveyed an impression that Lord Lansdowne hastened to explain was an impression he had not intended, still further strengthened the belief that the Government had not assumed responsibility for the Army Scheme. It was openly suggested in the debate that it was not in the full sense of the word a Government measure, but merely a statement of academic principles, which had been under consideration by the Government, but to which, as a whole, they were not definitely committed, and the uncertainty and vacillation of the Government as to the details of the treatment of the auxiliary forces was alleged to extend to the fundamental features of the whole Army scheme. The Government did not at this moment take the immediate steps that would have been necessary to eradicate this false impression, and the difficulties of the Secretary of State became increasingly great, owing to the prevailing uncertainty as to whether the Government were really supporting him in the measures for Army reform which they had authorised him to set forth in the House of Commons.

In the House itself the reception of the proposals was at first undoubtedly promising, and if open support from Ministers had been forthcoming during the remaining days of the session, it is probable that the Militia proposals, and with them the creation of the Home Service Army, would have gone through without further opposition. Before the session ended, steps were taken towards carrying out certain of the reforms which it was possible to undertake immediately. These were necessarily confined to the

changes affecting the regular Army, and involved the preliminary measures for the transformation of the redundant battalions, and the engagement of soldiers serving under the special terms proposed for the General Service Army. The withdrawal of certain units from the Colonies was to be carried out, simultaneously with the reduction of the remaining garrison battalions. Before Oakeley could leave London for a much needed rest and holiday, a temporary crisis occurred in the Army Council, a body which generally reflected the variations of the political world outside Pall Mall. A reference by a Cabinet Minister to the published scheme as the "proposals of the Army Council" alarmed one of the members of the Board. The difficulty was due to the old apprehension that outside criticism might be directed against, and have to be borne by the Council. Eventually the member of the Council and his friends were reassured, and the little crisis subsided; but these smaller troubles on the top of the long strain and anxiety of the past months were wearisome additions to an overworked Minister.

A short holiday journey was made to a village on the Swiss frontier; and long and happy weeks, with friends and children around him, were spent staying with Mr. and Mrs. Leverton Harris at Largie in Kintyre. Though most active pursuits were forbidden to him, Oakeley devoted himself to such shooting and fishing as was permitted, and lived as active a life as his slender store of strength allowed. Largie, with its views of moor and sea and distant islands, was an ideal place for such a holiday, and many plans were made that were realised in the following year for a long cruise to explore the western islands and coasts of Scotland.

After staying at Balmoral for a week as Minister, and paying some visits, he returned to London and to his work. Two letters written during this holiday are here given:—

To his Sister.

"I write in the train half-way between St. Cergue, the little Swiss village I have just left, and Besançon whither



THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S ROOM IN THE OLD WAR OFFICE, PALL MALL.
From a drawing by Will Arnold-Forster.

I am wending. I did not think there was as much rain in creation as has fallen in the last few days. There is supposed to be one of the finest views in Switzerland from St. Cergue, and Mont Blanc comes in the centre of it. But ne'er a mountain of any kind have I seen, nothing but impenetrable Scotch mist, just like what we get in Westmorland, only much worse. However, I don't say I haven't enjoyed my trip, for I found pleasant and amusing people—mostly French—at St. Cergue. Moreover, I am not too old yet to enjoy the incidents of travel and all the odd talks with odd people in odd places.

"You wrote me very sweetly, dear Poppy, for my birthday. Yes, I am a Secretary of State, no doubt, but not destined, I fear, to be a very fortunate one. I have got part of my way, but it was essential to success that I should get all my way. This is not wilfulness, but it is a fact that many good plans won't bear tinkering. Again, my work is a dead heave; so many are and must be against me. That is always the case when many vested interests are attacked. I could win with Time, because then I could keep up the pressure, and do things myself, but Time I shall not get.

"However, I shall have done some good, though others will profit; but I shall have, at any rate, told our people of their danger, which is great, and have pointed out to them the great meaning of the truth that *on ne badine pas avec la guerre*. I have shown them the way out, too, if only they will follow it."

The following was written at the end of August to a soldier friend:—

"Then coming to more difficult subjects—the reduction of the Volunteers and of the Militia. I intend to proceed with these two proposals. I am confident that unless I do something now, the thing will not be done, and it is of vital importance to the nation that some steps should be taken to get rid of shams, and to realise how great is the need for military efficiency. I shall probably 'perish in the attempt,' but the thing must be done. . . . My ambition is to get two or three Militia battalions to lead the way in transforming

themselves into Home Service battalions. . . . If I had all the battalions at home that I want, and had full power, I could get the whole thing started in about six weeks, but neither of the desired conditions is fulfilled, alas !

" I can only make progress if people here¹ really intend to make progress ; some of them, I think, do ; some of them do not. If I could see any clear intention on their part, if I thought they were looking into the future, and saw that good could come by merely letting things slide, I should have no objection to their caution, but that is not the situation. They know almost as well as I do (not quite, for they do not bring imagination to the task), how serious is the condition in which we stand. They know, too, and have told me very frankly, that they see no other solution than that which I propose, and yet, so great is their fear of departing in any way from accepted traditions, or of touching anything to which they have not been accustomed, that they will do anything rather than take responsibility or make real change.

" Of course, I know well enough that attacks in the Press do harm. However, there it is, and while the whole of the military world and most of the public are content with purely negative criticism which is so easy, I cannot expect to find very many champions.

" While I stand where I do, I know that there must be a change, and I see no alternative to the changes I have proposed, therefore I shall and must go on."

¹ In the War Office.

CHAPTER XVIII

Autumn Manœuvres—Incident of the Russian Baltic Fleet—Decentralisation Scheme carried out—"A Committee of Enquiry"—A Grave Protest—Short Service Battalions to be formed and a "Grouped Line Depot"—The Volunteer Question.

THE manœuvres in Essex, which took place during September, and at which he was present, were of peculiar and special interest to Oakeley.

While he was still at the Admiralty he had conceived the idea of joint naval and military operations. His original plan had been based more upon the exercise of naval strategy ; this plan had since been modified, and the actual manœuvres embraced only a landing of troops with the necessary naval co-operation. From a military point of view the value of the work performed in Essex was great. For the first time the Navy and Army worked together as component parts of what he had been one of the first to recognise ought to be one machine, whether used for offensive or for defensive operations.

In the past it had been the invariable custom to resort, for manœuvres on a large scale, to such open spaces and wide expanses as Salisbury Plain, or the Sussex or Berkshire Downs. For the first time it was recognised that the seaboard must necessarily be the terrain for opposition to an invading force, and that the neighbourhood of the coast is generally a country of small fields and intricate communications. The importance of the experience gained in Essex was, I am told, great, and helped materially towards the formation of a new school of thought on the subject of the tactics of Home Defence and the consequent training of the Home Army in peace.

The notorious achievement of the Russian fleet during its passage from the Baltic across the North Sea at the end of October created a situation which was naturally a perturbing one to the Army Council. Although, happily, hostilities were averted, our relations with Russia were for a time so strained as to force upon the minds of the War Office authorities the dangerous unpreparedness for war, which was the normal condition of the Army. Incidentally, no stronger proof could have been found of the absolute accuracy of the exposition that had been made of the existing defects of the Army. But the tension was speedily relaxed, and unfortunately with its relaxation a return to the *laissez-faire* attitude, which was the greatest obstacle to advance, was only too easy.

Shortly after the Russian incident he wrote to his sister : " As you suppose, the days immediately following the incident in the North Sea were full of anxiety. Had we been dealing with a rational Government and a wholly civilised people I should not have been alarmed ; for I have been convinced from the outset that the firing, foolish and blundering as it was, was the result of a *bonâ-fide* belief that the fleet was being attacked. In other words, the incident was a blunder and not an outrage, and two nations cannot fight about a blunder. The danger lay from the first, and indeed does now, in the folly and malevolence of the militant party in St. Petersburg. It is not always true that ' it takes two to make a quarrel.' Unluckily one side, if sufficiently ill-disposed, can usually force a quarrel on the other. However, the attitude of the Czar and Count Lamsdorf has been very correct, and Lansdowne has done his part admirably.

" I don't think our Press has shone ; though as usual we find that all the virtues were on our side and that we showed conspicuous moderation. There was room for anger, and the expression of it helped the Government and strengthened Lansdowne's hands. But there was not room, and never is, for all the wounding and offensive things which were said about the Russian people in general, and the Russian sailors in particular. Even if all that was said were true, it would have been better to leave it unsaid. But most of it was not true. The Russians have not shown themselves cowards.

Luckily not one Russian out of a million will read the attacks in our papers."

Before the anxiety occasioned by our strained relations with Russia had wholly subsided, it came to the knowledge of the Secretary of State that the rearmament of the artillery with the new quick-firing gun was falling behindhand, and had not made the progress that had been expected or promised. In view of the delicate foreign situation that still existed, and the immense importance of the rearmament of the artillery both in India and at home, this became a source of serious anxiety to Oakeley. Departmental difficulties were put forward to him to excuse the delay. But apart from the natural sense of the deep responsibility of a Minister, any delay in the rearmament of the artillery at such a critical time occasioned him the gravest concern and lasting anxiety, until the delay was made up and the guns actually provided.

One of the directions in which work was accomplished in the autumn of 1904 was in decentralising the administration of the Army.

An important item in the recommendations of the Reconstitution Committee still awaited actual enforcement. This was the Decentralisation Scheme which they had sketched in draft, and by means of which many administrative duties would devolve on a subordinate general in each of the principal commands.

Until the new system of commands and districts had become an accomplished fact, it had not been possible to give effect to these recommendations. Now that the change had been fully effected, and the new commands had been settled and published in Army Orders, it was possible to move ahead. Steps were taken at once to carry out the Decentralisation Scheme, and eventually an Army Order, introducing its proposals, was published in January 1905.

The members of the Reconstitution Committee were deeply interested, and anxious to give their advice in the matter of the further details by which their recommendations were to be carried out. Grateful as the Minister for War had always been for the very valuable work done by the Reconstitution Committee, he did not at first at all realise

the extent to which the interposition of members of that Committee would hereafter be carried. Not even his sense of obligation for the work achieved would have been allowed to interfere with his judgment ; that outside direction in War Office affairs is undesirable and likely to lead to confusion and misunderstanding. No allusion to these circumstances would be necessary but for the fact that they did in the course of the next few months, in the spring of 1905, very naturally lead to such difficulties and to regrettable misunderstandings.

Many anxieties, combined with serious troubles of health, made the last few months of 1904 a trying time to Oakeley. Even his great powers of detachment from personal considerations were not wholly proof against the long-continued strain. Speeches made at this time by his friend and colleague, Mr. Walter Long, and a letter from Mr. Long, gave him exceptional pleasure in a condition of depression which was so unusual to him :—

“ I had no idea you were depressed about the reception of your proposals, or that you thought your colleagues were not giving you sufficient support in their speeches. I have more than once expressed confidence in them, lately in Wales, and among my constituents ; but, of course, my speeches are not well reported.

“ I think your colleagues . . . are in hearty accord with you. You have been terribly overworked, have had some quite exceptional difficulties to meet, and your depression is natural, but it is not justified by the facts. We all have the fullest confidence in you, and we all feel that if you cannot carry out the necessary reforms, nobody can.”

“ The problem I have to solve,” Oakeley wrote at the beginning of the New Year, “ is a hard one, but it is in no sense an insoluble one. It is all the unnecessary obstacles, the waste of time over personal matters, that clog the wheels of progress. However, I have no business to grumble ; I shall have done something, shall have done my best without sparing myself, and I shall retain after all is done the same confidence in the truth of my ideas as I did when I first put them on paper.”

His great desire now was to make some progress, at

once, towards the foundation of the Short Service Army on which his scheme depended. If he had been free to take active steps and to go ahead with this part of his work, he could immediately have set about the formation of the new system of large depots, a matter to which he attached great weight, and one which many of the best-informed soldiers have spoken of as one of the most valuable of his proposals; and he could then begin in earnest the work of organising the Home Service battalions.

But the way of making this progress was still to be barred. The soldiers, alarmed by the lack of political support, begged for further assurances that the Government approved and would support the scheme. And at the same time the politicians, who had given but a reserved approval to the proposed changes, took this opportunity to point to the cautious attitude of the soldiers and to the lack of their whole-hearted support.

It was easy to demonstrate that absolute unanimity existed as to the defects in the present state of the Army and as to the resulting dangers, and to show that no alternative scheme that would hold water had been suggested to remedy the existing conditions. But in the difficult political circumstances of the moment, a temporising policy seemed the least dangerous course to the Government, and no immediate progress could be made. For the moment, therefore, it was decided that the direct advance that Oakeley wished to make in the direction of forming depots and organising the new Home Service Army must be again temporarily postponed.

These continual disappointments were hard to bear.

From henceforth Oakeley did not conceal from himself that the prospects were but slender of his being able to make solid progress with the dream of his life: the provision of an Army suited to the conditions and needs of our people and empire. But this conviction did not cause him to slacken his labours for the good of the Army, for whose welfare he was still responsible. He never wavered in his conviction that the lines he had followed were those which alone fulfilled the conditions of this difficult problem. Although he might no longer be working with a hopeful

prospect of success, whatever he might achieve would at any rate be so much gained for whoever succeeded him in office ; and to the last he worked as strenuously as ever to lay the foundations of military efficiency and security.

Another circumstance in the spring of 1905 made the relation of the Government to Army reform still more difficult and confused. A suggestion was made that a Committee might be appointed whose report would assist the Secretary of State in the passage of the Army Scheme through Parliament. Their pronouncement might, it was thought, be useful at this juncture, and in this the Secretary of State concurred, and made certain suggestions as to the *personnel* and reference of the Committee. The reference and scope of the enquiry were subsequently greatly enlarged. The members appointed to it were Lord Esher, Sir George Clarke, and Sir George Murray, and nominally they were to sit under the Presidency of the Prime Minister. Mr. Balfour was naturally too deeply engaged in the absorbing cares of his office to be able to take much part in the work of the Committee.

The composition of the Committee itself, the nature of its reference, and the methods that it followed, differed from what the Secretary of State had approved, and had agreed to.

The enquiry developed into a general review of the situation, and in practice the Committee sat in judgment upon all the proposals which had already been adopted by the Cabinet, and which had been announced to Parliament. It was not long before Oakeley began to realise what was actually taking place. Information having been collected, and the evidence of soldiers and officials taken, not only was the whole of the Secretary of State's Army Reform Scheme subjected to their investigation and criticism, but the Committee proceeded to draw up an alternative scheme to be placed in the field in competition with it. So little secrecy was observed in a matter so delicate, that the course and trend of the Committee's enquiry and conclusion were public property in the War Office, the House of Commons, and the Clubs. Emphatic and formal protests were entered by the Secretary of State.

That the Prime Minister, in instituting the enquiry, was

animated by a sincere desire to assist him, Oakeley always firmly believed; but that the proceedings as they were actually carried on were in accordance with the wishes of the Minister responsible for the War Office, or could possibly strengthen his hands, it was impossible to imagine.

In his Diary, Oakeley wrote: "The existence of two schemes is obviously bad, bad for the Government and, what is much more important, bad for the Army. All the world seems to know by now that a Committee, of which the Prime Minister is Chairman, has propounded a plan of Army reform, which differs fundamentally from that of the Secretary of State for War. It is quite obvious that such being the case, there can be neither certainty nor progress. No Minister would be justified in attempting to pursue a policy to which his chief is opposed. Nothing but evil could come of such an attempt. . . . While I have no desire whatever to embarrass the Prime Minister in any way, and shall most gladly relinquish my work to another at once, I cannot make changes in my own proposals, nor adopt the scheme of the Prime Minister's Committee.

"Last year I was requested to prepare a scheme which would comply with certain rigid conditions respecting cost, men, and efficiency. Those conditions have never been relaxed. As long as those conditions are regarded as binding, the alternative proposals are out of the question.

"I should have to ask leave to set forth to my colleagues the conditions under which I have worked, and the objects I was told to aim at. . . . I must be told whether those objects are still imperative, and, if so, whether they consider they are compatible with the suggestions of the new Memorandum; if they do, there is an end of the matter, and I sincerely trust some one may be found who will be able to achieve the object we all hope for. But the uncertainty that prevails at present, and the belief that I am not supported by my colleagues—a belief which, however erroneous, has enormously increased my difficulties, cannot possibly continue."

These protests were formally made to the Prime Minister. The alternative scheme that was evolved by the Committee did not survive examination, and did not see

the light. But in the meantime great harm had been done, and it seems now, after a lapse of years, almost inconceivable that a political blunder so grave should have been made. References were constantly made in the debates on Army Estimates to the Advisory Committees to which, it was hinted, the administration of Army affairs had been transferred by the Government.

The Opposition in the course of these debates naturally recalled the fervently expressed hope of the War Minister, a twelvemonth previously, that that might be the last occasion on which Estimates would be produced on the old basis. Why, they asked, very pertinently, were the new Estimates not based upon his scheme, which had already been laid before the House?

It is probably true in most of the affairs of life, but it is undoubtedly and inexorably true in political affairs, that the line of least resistance is not generally one which can be followed with ultimate success and without loss of dignity. Every month that the Government postponed the reforms which they had pledged themselves to accomplish, made their task not less, but more difficult, and weakened their position.

The report of Sir William Butler's Committee of Enquiry into the matter of certain scandals that had arisen as to stores and contracts at the end of the South African War was published in May 1905. The findings of the Committee imposed upon the War Minister the unpleasant duty of deciding what disciplinary action was to be taken with regard to officers who were either directly or indirectly inculpated. The scandal was not finally disposed of until a Judicial Commission had dealt with the whole question of the contracts and supplies at the conclusion of the war, and until actions in the Civil Courts had been brought by certain officers, who had suffered from the original verdict and from resulting comments in the Press. Meanwhile, the "South African Stores Scandal" provided material for lengthened discussion and questions in Parliament.

Much valuable time had to be given up to these debates in Parliament, and also to the steps that were rendered necessary by the verdict of the Butler Report.

On June 11 he wrote: "I have made what I may call my last will and testament. It is a statement of my position, saying categorically that I cannot stay at the W.O. unless I am publicly and strongly supported; that I must be allowed to give effect to the principles which I laid down last year, and which I have always insisted upon as essential. I have said exactly what I propose to do. If this is agreed to, I will go on; if not, not."

On June 22, after having fully stated his case to his colleagues, and demonstrated the impossibility of going on any longer under existing conditions, the Secretary of State was empowered to proceed a certain way along the path of reform with regard to his Home Service Army. "What will happen next I do not know," he commented at the time. "Of course the decision comes much too late, and is, moreover, a very restricted permission, but it is better than nothing; and, if time is given, I shall try to make good use of it."

He was free during the autumn to take the following steps:—

1. To open recruiting on the short service (two years) basis for eight battalions, then at home, belonging to "four battalion regiments."

2. To enlist about 900 short-service recruits for these battalions.

3. Subsequently to close the short-service recruiting and to reopen long-service (nine years) men for the long-service Army, until a sufficient number of these were obtained.

4. To quarter these experimental short-service battalions territorially, so far as existing barrack accommodation would allow.

5. To create one of the new large grouped Line depots.

6. To lay down the necessity for creating an adequate reserve.

7. To give service pay to long-service men at the higher rates proposed in his Memorandum.

A condition, however, was imposed at the urgent instance of the friends of the Militia, which fettered him in dealing with the Militia battalions, and which, in his opinion, did away with much of the value of these con-

cessions. Instead of converting Militia battalions into part of the Short Service Territorial Army, another almost hopeless attempt was to be made to convert it on the old lines into an efficient force for war.

The Army Council was reassured by the fact that these moderate measures were the accepted policy of the Government; and they were proceeded with through the autumn that followed.

So much of the time and energy of the Opposition was at this moment concentrated upon the Volunteer question that there was little opportunity or time to spare for any serious consideration of the far more important features of the reform scheme which dealt with the regular Army.

The discussion of the Volunteer vote, which culminated on July 13, showed the insincerity of the Opposition attack on Army reform proposals. The Secretary of State, when making his original statement in the House, had very clearly indicated his purpose with reference to the Volunteers. He wished to divide the force into two categories into which, by force of circumstances, its members naturally fell. (1) Those who could give sufficient time for training to comply with the War Office standard of efficiency, and (2) those who, though willing to do all in their power to serve their country, were unable to devote so much time to preparation, or who, for other reasons, did not fulfil the necessary requirements. With this object a circular had been issued—which had met with approval from many Volunteer commanding officers—which laid down the requirements for efficiency, and provided for medical inspection of members of Volunteer corps, which should decide their physical fitness for service.

An agitation, which was largely political, was got up against this confidential circular. The subsequent transformation of the Volunteers into the Territorial force, with the resulting compulsory medical inspection, has exposed the unreality of this grievance. The main object of the proposal of the Secretary of State, which was to increase the efficiency of the Volunteer force, at a possible sacrifice of inefficient members, and, incidentally, to reduce unre-

munerative expenditure, had been received in the House with general approval. But the Opposition discerned a valuable electioneering cry in the accusation that the Secretary of State for War desired to "destroy the Volunteers." The Government carried the vote in the House of Commons, but at the expense of long debates and much opposition.

"My whole fight, as I see it," he said at this time, "is against sham armies and make-believe organisations." He had learnt enough from history, and had sufficient experience of warfare under modern conditions, to know that no justification existed for the pleasant delusion that an amateur soldier could hope to achieve success against trained continental troops simply because he might be a Volunteer and an Englishman. Consequently, to the last he never ceased to point out the danger of everything which savoured of sham or make believe in what should be the exceedingly serious work of preparation for war.

Looking back at the work done during this session of Parliament, no one could fail to be struck by the courage with which he maintained the long uphill fight on behalf of what he felt convinced was for the good of the Army.

No one knew better than he did at that time, that he could not hope to carry out the work he had dreamed of accomplishing when he went to the War Office, and which would have been the fulfilment of a life's endeavour.

One of his friends thus wrote to me :—

"A less conscientious or less energetic statesman than Arnold-Forster would be content to let things be, to disclaim any further responsibility for a state of inefficiency which he is not permitted to remedy, and to throw upon the War Office the duty of extricating itself from the situation into which it has drifted. Had he chosen to consult his own interests he would have resigned a thankless task. But he has a more complete knowledge than even his military advisers of the reality of the dangers in which the Army stands; he sees the risks which it might run with a change of Government; and he dreads that the regular troops may be sacrificed to the interests of the more politically important auxiliary forces. He is determined to do what he can to save them, even against themselves, from the perils which he foresees. Alone, and almost unsupported, he is doing something every day to improve the efficiency of the Army; to lay some foundation of the system which he knows would ensure safety, so that his successor may at least be committed to erecting the superstructure of a re-organised Army on the ground-plan of his design. With this aim

he is content to undertake work far beyond his strength, to squander his health, and to submit to continual obstruction from those whose business it should be to give him loyal support."

In July he wrote to his sister, Mrs. Vere O'Brien: "You have been pleasant in condoling with me in my supposed misfortunes. I don't say that I have none, and of worries and anxieties I have, indeed, many. But things are by no means so bad as they might be, and I am not feeling nearly so downhearted as I have often done during the past eighteen months. Of course all this South African business is a trouble, but the whole thing is absurdly exaggerated, and now that we have got our Commission¹ (for which, by the way, I pressed from the outset) things will quiet down, and assume their proper proportions.

"Luckily I have a pleasant subject also to write about. After many months of hard fighting I have got a unanimous decision out of the Cabinet, giving me, in most categorical terms, the right to go ahead. Of course, it may be too late to do much good now, but I am going to try; and I feel a much happier man than I did.

"It is a pity, though, my colleagues could not have made up their minds a little sooner. They were bound to come round to my conclusions in the long run. They have not time or inclination to study the facts; I do know the facts—really, I do.

"Happily, the Army improves every day, as all our officers testify. The recruits still come in; the Guards are full. The new guns are being finished by scores. The cavalry was, by universal consent, never so good as it is now. Our new finance system is now working. Some day people will understand these things. I must be content, for the present, with knowing them myself."

.

To his friend Mr. Leverton Harris, M.P., who was undergoing a short rest-cure in a nursing home, he wrote at this time in a lighter vein "a letter calculated to soothe"—

¹ The Judicial Commission appointed to enquire into the South African Stores Scandal.

"10th July 1905.

"DEAR LEVERTON—July has arrived with all the pomp of summer. The tittlebat are rising freely in the ornamental water of St. James's Park. Several netters have taken fine bottlefuls of this sporting fish. They tell me that Parliament is still in session, but neither the lover of nature nor the votary of the town pays much heed to the agitations of this tiresome assembly. My wife gives a rural fête in the garden of the Abbey on Wednesday next. We anticipate a fine occasion for aquatic sports. The heavens lower, and the clouds are fat with rain.

"I have been reading a book on the 'Philosophy of the Human Species.' I have learnt some things of value from its perusal. I have come to the conclusion that the only essential portions of the human organism are the thumbs and the lesser intestine. All else appears to be superfluous, or noxious, or both. The greater intestine, the stomach, the appendix, the hippocampus major are certainly noxious, the head and the extremities are apparently superfluous. Probably, when we meet again, I shall be merely a truncated shell. They talk of war in the East and of the success of the Japanese against the Russians. There appears to be truth in the rumour, but no certain news as yet.

"I hope to find a ship in which I may sail in your Scottish waters next month, but as yet the vessel has not been secured.

"I trust your rest-cure goes well. The excitements, as you describe them, seem to be judiciously limited. That is well. I trust I have not broken the treatment. I have sought to be calm.

"Queen Anne is dead—the 'great Anna is no more.' I have a story to tell you about a fishing exploit of mine, which will interest you. It was a trout which I fished for for seven days under Hammersmith Bridge. The eighth day I caught it. It scaled—but no, I must not strain you. Perhaps you are not accustomed to fishing stories.—Believe me, yours ever,
H. O. A.-F."

The same friend received the following formal acknowledgment of the gift of a miniature toy cannon, purchased

on the Paris Boulevards, which had been duly despatched to the British War Minister.

“WAR OFFICE.

“SIR—I am desired by the Secretary of State for War to thank you for the sample field-gun (French pattern) which you have submitted to him. I am to say, however, that the type of gun for the British service has already been decided upon, and that no use can, therefore, be made of the gun now sent. Mr. Arnold-Forster, however, is much impressed with the rapidity of the action and the simplicity of the loading arrangements, and thinks you may be glad to know that with an expert staff no less than three rounds have been discharged in twenty minutes. The practice of attaching the projectile to the muzzle of the gun also seems, to Mr. Arnold-Forster, to be an interesting and valuable departure.—I am, your obedient servant,

E. R. DAVIS.

F. Leverton Harris, Esq., M.P.”

To Mrs. Vere O'Brien he wrote in August from the steam yacht, *Queen Margaret* :—

“KILBRENNAN SOUND.

“I cannot tell you what a change our life during the last few days has been, after the imprisonment with hard labour I have had to undergo for so long in the House of Commons. Here we are in a tidy little steamer, gently making our way down this beautiful Sound, with the peaks of Arran, blue and jagged on the port hand, and the lower lands of Kintyre on the starboard. The sun is shining brightly, and even warmly, the sky is blue and the sea is blue. Altogether we consider ourselves very fortunate, for though we began our cruise last Friday in terrible weather, the last three days have been halcyon days, and these smooth lochs and soft-coloured mountains have many a time reminded me of Como and Maggiore.

“You write me pleasant and cheering things about myself, my dear. I wish the quarter of them were true; alas, I know they are not. But as to the philosophy and patience, I must needs be a patient philosopher if I am to live at all.

A contented one I am not, and never shall be until I have seen the affairs of the Army in which I have, perforce, concerned myself so much of late, run on very different lines from those which now approve themselves to this people.

"My dear Flo, the danger is grave, and some day we shall get a great awakening."

The Edinburgh Volunteer Review on September 18 which he attended was of great and special interest to him, for the idea of the review had been originated by him, and though many difficulties had been interposed, it was successfully carried out, and then, as always, he admired the magnificent material which was contained — but often wasted—in the old Volunteer force. On September 30 he returned to London and took up, once more, the work of the Office.

The following extract from a letter which he wrote shortly after this time shows better than any mere statement or comment made by his friends could do, the extent to which merely personal considerations were eliminated from his thoughts. Even bitter attacks were looked at from the point of view of their effect upon the *work* which he wanted to carry out, and I never knew him to give a thought to their personal side, or to the harm that might be caused to his future career :—

"It is with great regret that I have seen the paragraphs in the newspapers, which, in my opinion, are purely mischievous. Indeed, the constant misrepresentations and inventions which appear daily in the newspapers are most prejudicial to the Army. To politicians like myself they are not, perhaps, important, because they can be measured at their true value. But to soldiers, who are steadily working and doing their best under very difficult circumstances, they are most discouraging. The Army Council and the War Office have many difficulties to contend with, but of this I am certain that, despite all these difficulties, the Army is being steadily improved in every branch. In three years' time it will be better than it has been for many a year. The infantry battalions will be full, and they will be full of men; the reserve will be stronger than it has ever been; drafting

in the cavalry will have ceased, and the cavalry regiments will be well manned and well horsed. The artillery will have been rearmed ; every store will be full : a new type of barrack will have been created ; the Guards will be full, and they will have, I believe, their full complement of officers. If I am permitted to do what I desire, a real General Staff will for the first time have been created in our Army. All this work has either been accomplished, or will shortly be accomplished. Much more might be accomplished if the Army Council were permitted to prepare the Army for war without reference to considerations which have nothing to do with war. But I am sanguine enough to believe that, even in respect to the Militia and Volunteers, we may accomplish something, and what we have been able to do with the yeomanry increases my confidence. I know what I have said to be true, and I recognise the immense importance of steady effort and continuous progress.

“ It is for these reasons that I greatly regret the perpetual attacks which are made upon the administration of the War Office.”

CHAPTER XIX

The General Staff of the Army—Memorandum on the formation of a General Staff—Last days at the War Office—Letters—A summary of Aims and Achievements.

WHEN Oakeley returned to London and to the War Office in the autumn, he knew that his remaining time in office must be very short. The sands of the life of Parliament were running out apace: he therefore concentrated all his efforts on two points that he conceived to be essential. First and foremost he desired to see established the principles on which the formation of a General Staff of the Army should be laid. And, secondly, he hoped to have time to inaugurate one of the grouped infantry depôts, which was to be placed at Lichfield on account of its central position.

“Life goes tranquilly and not unpleasantly with us,” he wrote to his sister. “The intense anxiety and worry which at one time made existence rather a burden are past, or at any rate they are absent for the time. I have floated into smoother water. I have got my way about some things—the short-service battalions, the big depôt, the cavalry scheme and the guns, and the Medical Department, and a good many minor things about which I needn’t trouble you. Above all, the long-service recruiting has gone exactly as I said it would. Already we have taken over 22,000 long-service infantry, and ever since my Norwich speech the numbers have been increasing by leaps and bounds. This week we took 180 more men for the Army than we took during the corresponding week of last year, the biggest recruiting year we have ever had in peace time. It is not in the least wonderful or remarkable, it is merely common sense; but, then, half my efforts have been devoted to trying to

convince people that common sense and the Army problem have anything to do with each other.

"I have only two important things to do now. One to start a real General Staff, the other to abolish flogging in the military prisons. I think I shall live to do both."

His Memorandum on the General Staff of the Army was completed at the beginning of November. It was published on November 22.

To no work of his life did he attach more significance than to that which led up to the production of this Memorandum, on account of its importance for the future development of the Army. It was natural that he should care thus greatly about it, because he had for years made a close study of the question, and had in a Memorandum for the Cabinet¹ written in 1902, put on record his belief that in our Army the duties of a General Staff were not being adequately performed; it was natural, therefore, that he should wish to use his position of responsibility at the War Office to create the institution which he had so often declared to be absolutely indispensable.

The Memorandum of November 1905 showed, as he pointed out a year later, that—

"an attempt was being made to lay the foundation on which a real General Staff for the Army might in time be constructed. . . . As a matter of fact the document forms but one of a series of papers in which the all-important question of the composition and functions of the Staff were dealt with.

"The Memorandum itself is brief and simple, but it must not be supposed that its preparation and issue were unattended with difficulty. As it stands, it was the outcome of much deliberation. Every phrase was chosen with care, every statement was carefully weighed. In the judgment of the Secretary of State the Memorandum represented the opinion of the best and most progressive soldiers in the Army; but it would be an exaggeration to pretend that it found universal acceptance among all schools of thought, that its publication was unattended with difficulty or escaped criticism.

"Fortunately there are signs that in this matter at any rate there is likely to be continuity of policy, and the Army Order issued (by Mr. Haldane) on the 12th September 1906 is an almost verbatim repetition of the Memorandum of November 1905."²

¹ See chap. xii.

² *The Army in 1906.*

In later years it gave him deep satisfaction to observe this continuity of policy, and to see that that which he had hoped for and had worked for so long was gradually coming to pass ; and that under the guidance of the present Chief of the Staff, Sir William Nicholson, and other soldiers devoted to the Army, and determined to leave the Army and their department better than they found it, the General Staff is growing steadily in prestige, and commanding the respect of the best elements in the Army.

Before he left office Oakeley had at least the deep satisfaction of seeing that the lines which have guided this development were firmly laid down, and of knowing that this important step towards the formation of the General Staff had actually and irrevocably been taken.

The Minute of the Secretary of State to the Chief of the General Staff respecting the formation of a General Staff began as follows :—

The General Staff of the Army.

“CHIEF OF THE GENERAL STAFF—At the meeting of the Army Council held on the 9th August 1905 certain general conclusions with regard to the formation of the General Staff were arrived at. These conclusions were as follows :—

- (a) Officers of the General Staff should be selected on their own individual qualifications, and not on account of any appointment which they are holding, or for which they may be selected.
- (b) The list of officers should at present be small.
- (c) Appointments should be for four years.
- (d) At the end of every four years from the date of his first appointment to the General Staff the desirability of the retention of an officer's name on the General Staff List should be considered.
- (e) The general principle of accelerated promotion should be accepted, the question of the extent and nature of this promotion to be deferred for further consideration.
- (f) The list of duties of the General Staff, as detailed in Appendices E and F of Army Order 30 of 1905, should be further amplified.
- (g) There should not be a separate General Staff Corps.
- (h) The possession of a Staff College certificate, though most desirable, should not be an absolute *sine qua non* for being placed on the General Staff List.

The principles approved by the Council must now be regarded as governing the composition and duties of the General Staff, and the time

has come for taking action in accordance with these decisions. It is desirable, that in carrying out the work entrusted to you by the Army Council you should have before you a clear statement of the objects for which the General Staff is to be formed and the duties which it is to perform.

It is impossible to secure continuity of policy in Army administration without reasoned and well-ordered thought, and it is with a view to securing this desideratum that the formation of a General Staff has been undertaken by the Army Council. At present, as in the past, every officer in the Army has his own opinion on every military subject, the result being that there is an infinite variety of opinions upon every subject. Hence the advice tendered to the Secretary of State by his responsible military advisers is the individual advice and opinion of the officer tendering it, and it is *not* the carefully balanced opinion, after mature thought and deliberation, of a collective body of experts. Thus continuity of thought, of purpose, and of action are wholly impossible, and in their place we find disjointed and unconnected plans. No true 'military opinion' does or can exist.

There are, moreover, many duties which are now not performed at all, or which are insufficiently performed, and which ought in the future to be carried out by officers of the General Staff.

The objects to be kept in view in forming such a Staff are as follows :—

1. To gather the ablest men in the Army together, and by some system of advancement and promotion to make sure that the fortunes of the Army are always in their hands.
2. By means of these men to form a school of military thought which shall be abreast, or ahead, of that of any other army.

Subject to a first list being drawn up and approved by the Army Council generally, all future selections for, and promotions in, the General Staff will be recommended by the Chief of the General Staff alone, without the intervention of the Selection Board or of the Army Council. In no other manner can the Staff be made homogeneous and its action inspired by a single purpose. . . ."¹

The Memorandum concludes with a definition of the eventual position of the Chief of the General Staff, and with further reference to the principle of accelerated promotion.

Before the projected Infantry Dépôt at Lichfield could be established Mr. Balfour's Government had resigned. On Monday, December 4, Oakeley attended at the War Office for the last time. In his Diary for that day he notes :—

"I wrote a Minute on the question of flogging in the

¹ This paragraph in the Memorandum of 1905 is the only one of which the substance was materially altered in the General Staff Order issued by Mr. Haldane in September 1906.

Army and a letter recommending ———, ———, ——— for the General Staff. . . . To the Office at 11.45. Finished one or two papers, and then commenced saying good-bye to the members of Council, Directors, and others. . . . Partings are never pleasant. I have differed from several of my colleagues, but, happily, though our divisions have been sharp, we have always remained on pleasant personal terms. To part from ———, ———, and ———, ———, and ——— was a real grief. And ——— and ——— have been good friends and very competent workers.

"I tried to say one word, other than personal, to each. It was this: 'I have tried to fight the battle of the regular Army. I greatly fear that if the policy of trying to keep up the peace Army to its old strength with the colours is persisted in it will end in disaster. It means Army Estimates of over £31,000,000, and that people won't stand. The result would be the very worst that could happen—the destruction of units of the regular Army with their officers. The true policy is the Navy footing. Keep your ships in 'peace commission' full and ready; keep the *personnel* of your reserve ships as cadres only, and expand them in war; otherwise there will be a calamity to the Army. I trust I may not be a true prophet—but wait and see.' The Chief of the General Staff told me, I am glad to say, that he is now quite reconciled to my Memorandum on the General Staff, and that it has done nothing but good."¹

On Monday the 11th of December, he records in his Diary the delivery of the seals of office to King Edward at Buckingham Palace, and also speaks of the sympathy and great kindness that had been constantly shown to him by His Majesty, both in his difficult task as War Minister and in his special trial of ill health. "I thanked him for his kindness, which has indeed been real and constant, and then there was nothing more to say or do. So I am S. of S. no longer. Nor do I think I shall ever be again; but, indeed, I never sought or expected office. In this matter I am a perfectly genuine philosopher, not by principle or design, but by disposition, which, though it is not in any way to my credit, is undoubtedly convenient."

¹ Diary, December 1905.

To Mrs. Vere O'Brien.

2 THE ABBEY GARDEN,
10th December 1905.

"Last things are never particularly agreeable, and I cannot pretend that I write my last letter as S. of S. without some regrets. But the compensations are many, and I can truly say that I shall give up my seals to-morrow with a tranquil, if not with a perfectly contented mind. Quite content I can hardly be, for though I have done much more than I expected, I have left undone much that I hoped to see accomplished. But there again I need not break my heart. In another five years I could have done much, in another five weeks little enough. However, I don't intend to write a long story about my work now. You know more about it than most people, and you have seen the difficulties I have had to meet."

Almost the last letter which he wrote from the War Office was to a very distinguished soldier who had on more than one occasion openly acknowledged the great merits of his proposals for the efficiency of the Land Forces, and it contained the following prophetic passage :—

"I see before us an immediate and great danger—that of a sweeping and utterly irrational reduction of the regular Army. The Army has no friends, no spokesman, and yet it is the Army which has done all our fighting, and which, if I mistake not, will always do it. If it should prove that what —— said gives a further impetus to the passion for sham soldiering, and encourages still further the belief that you can safely cut down the regular Army if you sufficiently increase, not the efficiency, but the numbers of the Volunteer force, then I think the speech will be worth 100,000 men to any enemy of this country. To tell the truth, the Volunteers have been flattered and praised until all measure has been lost. Many of them can be made very good, some of them are very bad, and this indiscriminate 'praise' does, I believe, encourage the worst and not the best elements in the force.

"Well, I must cease my lamentations. I am about to

lay my burden down. For two years I have been fighting my hardest for what I believe to be the true interests of the regular Army, and I am bold enough to think that the time may come before long when soldiers will see this. . . . It is, and I suppose always will be, an unpopular fight."

The appointment of Mr. Haldane to the War Office gave him sincere pleasure, and he welcomed his successor warmly in a letter which crossed Mr. Haldane's own words of cordial greeting and acknowledgment written on the same day :—

2 THE ABBEY GARDEN, WESTMINSTER,
11th December 1905.

"DEAR HALDANE—I think I need not tell you that I see your appointment to the War Office with deep satisfaction.

"I don't pretend to think that you will agree with me either on matters of principle or in matters of detail ; though, being very human, I hope you will. But I am glad, because I know that whatever policy you decide to adopt, you will bring to the work of the department a powerful mind, a steady judgment, and, above all, a sense of the magnitude and importance of the task you are called upon to perform. I wish you every success.

"You can't expect me to say that I will support whatever you do. That would be absurd. Of course I shall make the best fight I can for what I think right. But I can say most honestly that I long to support you, and that no thought of jealousy or personal feeling will mar the satisfaction I shall feel if you make the Army powerful, efficient, and popular."

It was a real personal trouble to Oakeley that, by one of the earliest acts of the new administration of the War Office, the Army Council lost the services of the Quarter-Master-General. Oakeley had written shortly before in his Diary a brief note recording his sense of the services of this colleague :—

"General Plumer has asked for nothing, has received nothing, but has deserved much. He has been perfectly

loyal, has made no speeches, has discussed the work of the Office inside the Office alone, has laboured steadily and successfully at the work of his department, and whenever he leaves will be able to look back on a record of work performed of which he may be proud and for which the Army will be grateful." His friendship with General (now Sir Herbert) Plumer, was one among many such friendships with soldiers which gave Oakeley great pleasure, and in General Plumer's house one of the last afternoons of his life was passed.

The principal objects which had been aimed at in the Army policy of 1903-5 have been fully explained in the foregoing pages. To conclude this chapter it will be sufficient, very briefly, to summarise these objects, and to show how far they had actually been accomplished when the change of Government took place.

I. The establishment of a *long-service Army* for the purpose of providing the garrison of the Empire at home and abroad in time of peace.

By October 1905 more than 200,000 long-service men were in the ranks.

II. The establishment of a *short-service Army*, remaining at home in time of peace and furnishing a great reserve for the expansion of the Army in time of war.

By October 1905 the Army Reserve had greatly increased, and was increasing. In that month concurrent long and short service was begun. It was stopped by Mr. Haldane early in 1906.

III. The creation of a real *striking force* of all arms, ready to take the field complete at a moment's notice, and without waiting for mobilisation.

Under the scheme of 1904-5 a striking force of 16,000 men of all arms would have been provided.

IV. The abolition of the *linked-battalion system*, which involves equality in the number of battalions at home and abroad respectively;

The abolition of the *regimental dépôt*; and

V. The institution of *large dépôts* for the training of recruits and the supply of drafts.

VI. The employment, in congenial work, as a matter of right, of all long-service soldiers discharged with a good character.

It was made clear that the creation of the short-service Army would open many appointments for long-service soldiers on completion of their first term of colour service as warrant and non-commissioned officers in the proposed short-service Army.

VII. A change in the organisation of the cavalry to avoid the necessity of drafting men from one regiment to another.

It was proposed to extend the colour service to seven years, to raise the age to nineteen, to establish large dépôts for training and for supplying drafts, and eventually to establish concurrent long and short service.

By October 1905 the shortage of cavalry officers had been almost made up.

VIII. *The multiplication of units* ; with its necessary consequence a great increase in the number of officers and N.C.O.'s, giving increased power of expansion in time of war.

IX. In order to make our immense *auxiliary forces* available for war it was proposed in 1904—

A. To utilise the Militia as the basis of the proposed short-service Army, making it liable for foreign service, enlistment to be for two years with the colours and from six to ten years in the reserve. The battalions to be permanently quartered, as far as possible, within the districts with which they were associated.

In November 1905 the Militia numbered 85,814.¹

B. To alter the allotment of the money available for the Volunteer force so as to allow of a larger sum being spent upon the most valuable portion of the force.

¹ It may be noted that in March 1909, when Oakeley wrote his last words on this subject, the Special Reserve, which had replaced the Militia, numbered 68,000, but that of this number 37,799 were old Militia men completing their term of service who will disappear in two or three years. Six months' training is given to the special reservist, in place of the two years' colour service which was unanimously laid down by all military authorities in 1904 as the minimum training for the soldier.

(*Note.*—The Volunteers had been reported by the Norfolk Commission to be unfit to face an enemy's troops. Further expenditure being then impossible, it was at first intended to reduce the least valuable portion of the force and to spend the existing Volunteer vote upon securing increased efficiency in the remainder. Subsequently, owing to widespread opposition to any reduction of numbers, it was proposed to retain the force entire and to increase the vote by £180,000 or £200,000.)

In November 1905 the Volunteer force numbered 249,611.

C. To extend the principle of the enlistment of selected Volunteers into the First Class Army Reserve.

This has been continued by Mr. Haldane.

D. To provide a brigade and divisional organisation for the Volunteers.

(The efficiency of the brigade and divisional organisation of the Territorial force that is due to Mr. Haldane was cordially welcomed and acknowledged by his predecessor in office.)

CHAPTER XX

“ Never before this time have we had such good material in the Army. The morale both of officers and men is higher than it was. The Army is in a condition in which I do not think it has been before both in point of quantity and quality.”
Speech of Rt. Hon. R. H. HALDANE, March 1906.

A Farewell to West Belfast—The General Election, 1906—Croydon election—Speech in the House on Army Affairs—Illness—Letters.

BEFORE the last days at the War Office had passed we had paid a farewell visit to Belfast. In 1904, when we realised how carefully Oakeley's slender store of strength would hereafter have to be husbanded, we had come with deep regret to the conclusion that an Irish constituency, which involved so long and tiring a journey, would be, henceforward, too great a strain for him. He felt deeply the prospect of saying farewell to the warm-hearted friends who had done so much for us, and who had fought his battles with so much courage and loyalty. When it came to the point it seemed harder than ever to say good-bye, and the meetings and gatherings of our fellow-workers moved Oakeley very much. “ The good-will and kindness shown to us both is so genuine,” he wrote, “ and their regret so obvious. I think I was right to decide to leave the ‘ West Division,’ but had I thought my health would serve, and known that the Home Rule battle would have to be fought over again, I could hardly have given up these tried friends and hard workers. . . .”

The memory of the West Division, its Homeric fights, its passionate beliefs, and stormy contests could never be effaced, nor the great faithfulness and kindness of our northern friends be ever forgotten.

Meanwhile, when it had become known in 1904 that

Oakeley would be unable again to stand for West Belfast, the Conservative Associations of Croydon had come forward, and had invited him to stand for this great Surrey constituency that was within an easy distance from London, and by the time of the General Election, which followed Mr. Balfour's resignation and the formation of Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's Ministry, we had already got to know the constituency fairly well. A Labour candidate was already in the field, and the fight became a three-cornered one when Mr. Somers Somerset became the official Liberal candidate.

The Chinese labour agitation was used in Croydon, as elsewhere, as the chief plank of the Liberal platform. The election of 1906 will long be remembered on account of the crushing series of defeats that it brought on the Unionist party and its leaders, and when Oakeley was returned for Croydon, by a reduced majority, he was for some days the only member of the late Cabinet that had been re-elected to Parliament.

The new House of Commons met in February, when the crowded benches of the Government side were confronted by a mere handful of members of the Unionist opposition.

Mr. Haldane introduced the Army Estimates in March. In his speech he dwelt, as every Minister for War must necessarily dwell, on the causes of the growth of military expenditure and the need for reduction. This is indeed the problem which has faced all his predecessors, and which must face those who succeed him in his onerous post. He had the sympathy of all men when he said that he proposed to take ample time, and not to be hurried on the path of reform which he desired to tread. His position, backed by the authority and driving power conferred by a great Parliamentary majority, made this not only very wise but made it possible. To his immediate predecessors no such time of grace had been, or could have been given. Mr. Brodrick succeeded to the office at the close of a devastating war. Mr. Haldane's immediate predecessor took office when the Army was a rapidly disappearing quantity, and no sufficient time could be given for delay or standing still.

Mr. Haldane was in a happier position, for as he said

in his first speech, "The Army was never more efficient than it is at the present time. Never better in *personnel* or in organisation."¹

He found a large and growing force of long-service infantry, he found recruiting steadily progressing, the long-service enlistment large, the garrison artillery full up, and 600 of the new field guns ready.

With the main propositions laid down in his speech all were in agreement. On only one point raised in it was there likely to be any serious difference of opinion.

The Secretary of State said that he looked forward to a great change in the body from which the regular Army was to be reinforced in time of war, and sketched, in outline, his ideas of a large, partially trained, voluntary, citizen Army, "decentralised as to administration, governed locally by the people themselves, not by those who would impose on them, from without, military duties which they might not be disposed to undertake," which would form a large reserve of semi-trained men, "and be able to produce a very large supporting and contributory force."²

It was on this point that Oakeley then and ever joined issue with him.

The example chosen by the Secretary of State to illustrate the military value of semi-trained men was one that was not calculated to reassure the student of history: he quoted the example of General Chanzy's army. The story of the failure and demoralisation of the army of the Loire has been often told; General Chanzy himself wrote its story in words that have become historic. Twenty-two thousand unwounded prisoners were taken with their colours, guns, and ammunition, and, with their fall, Paris lost its best hope of relief, and France had to sign a disastrous peace. "The disadvantages of untrained men were only too apparent to the French commander-in-chief," wrote one of our military critics, "and to every nation, save, perhaps, to our own."

If it be really possible to produce an Army which can fight against the best modern troops in the world, and can

¹ Hansard, vol. cliii. p. 673.

² *Ibid.* p. 677.

succeed after having had such a training as was described by the Secretary of State, and officered as such an Army must be officered—"Then," said Oakeley, "it is the greatest discovery that has ever been made. But," he argued, "there is a strong presumption that in the sharp conflict of opinion that exists between us and all continental nations on this point, it may be we ourselves and not they who are wrong. If it be true that untrained and ill-officered men are always beaten by armies that are well trained and well officered, it behoves us to weigh with jealous care any proposals which have for their object the multiplication of untrained armies, and the destruction of the small and disciplined force which the country possesses, and which has never yet wholly failed it." The idea of second-best armies, he pleaded, is most dangerous. "The second-best fleet is now at the bottom of the sea of Japan. The second-best army was destroyed on the plains of Liao Yang and Mukden."

In July a further and more detailed exposition of the new scheme for a large territorial voluntary Army was made by Mr. Haldane. The policy adopted by him and by the Government is that which still holds the field, and that to which he has ever since devoted his great talents and energies.

Those who, like Oakeley, believed that this policy was one fraught with gravest danger to the State, were compelled to oppose it, and to point out the perils that they saw. In Oakeley's case, his own beliefs had been strengthened and confirmed by the unanimous and overwhelming nature of all the military opinion that he had been able to consult. The military view on the policy of relying upon semi-trained and imperfectly officered troops had been expressed to him by all the soldiers he had consulted, and the considered judgment of our chief military authorities had been given in evidence before the Royal Commission on the War, and stands on record.

In his belief, to place reliance on a partially trained Army, which must receive, after the outbreak of hostilities, the training which alone could make it fit to meet a con-

tinental Army was to run the greatest risk. The corollary of this policy, the diminution of the strength of our small regular Army, he believed to be its most disastrous feature.

There may be division of opinion as to the military value, in time of war, of slenderly trained forces, which cannot be utilised for foreign service, and as to the wisdom, or unwisdom, of large expenditure upon them. But as to the necessity for maintaining our regular Army in a state of absolute efficiency there is, in theory at any rate, no difference of opinion, and any policy that tends to diminish its strength or to lessen its reserve-making power Oakeley regarded with grave suspicion. To starve or to reduce the Army for the sake of the popular unprofessional force, was, he thought, to neglect the chief lessons that have been taught by military history and experience.

In the summer, thanks to the kindness of Admiral Bosanquet, Oakeley had once more, and for the last time, the opportunity of accompanying the naval manœuvres as a guest on board H.M.S. *Euryalus*. With all his old admiration for the men of the Navy, and with all his old zest, he followed the operations and enjoyed the voyage, and came back feeling hopeful about himself, and with a measure of returning strength and health. The rest of the summer we spent in a beautiful, remote corner of Cornwall. In September, further grave illness declared itself, and pleurisy and fresh heart trouble kept him for many weeks in bed, and in acute suffering. His courage and cheerfulness were undimmed, and whenever pain allowed him to dictate, or to correct the proofs of the book¹ that he was finishing, he went on with his task.

From Roseteague he wrote to Mr. Leverton Harris :—

“ I have had a tiresome time in bed, but am down to-day for the first time. Nearly all the pain due to the pleurisy has left me ; but of course I am weak, as the result of being in bed so long. Otherwise I feel well. As to internal mischief, that is another matter. Either I shall be able to do as much as I have done for the last four years, in which

¹ *The Army in 1906*, published by John Murray.

case I shall be well content ; or I shall not, in which case—well, I suppose I must be content too ; for indeed, sick or well, rich or poor, I am a most fortunate man in the wealth of affection, friendship, and kindness with which I am so richly endowed.

“Of course, I am somewhat of a ‘fighting man,’ and I hope to go on fighting as before. I think I shall, but ‘you can never tell,’ so I must be prepared for either result. At present I am determined to get well, and feel quite in the mood for doing it.

“I hope we shall see you at Basset Down. The rock garden and the gem collection are worth a visit, and so, indeed, is my father-in-law, who is a really wonderful person. My book is all in type, except a small portion of the Appendix. M——’s great piece of work is finished—after four years—and Will’s picture is approaching completion ; so you see we are a hard-working crew.”

To his sister he wrote, at the same time :—

“I have written the whole of my book with the exception of one chapter—that on the General Staff and the Committee of Defence. The slips are being paged, so I am in sight of the end, which is a good job.

“I am reading Fortescue’s excellent *History of the Army*. It is curious to note what a persistent enemy of military efficiency the House of Commons has been. Still more interesting to note is the absolute regularity of the present phase of reduction with a view to economy. I don’t exaggerate when I say that the thing has been done thirty times since the ‘New Model’ Army came to an end. Every time the arguments have been the same ; every time the result has been the same ; and that result has been reaction within a period varying from two to ten years ; an endeavour to recreate in haste and in a panic what has been destroyed for purely political purposes. The corporal of Garrison Artillery who is in charge of the fort here is a long-service soldier, who has seen much of the world. He has been six years acting sergeant in command of the artillery in Nigeria. He spoke to M—— of the reductions with consternation. ‘I suppose,’ said he rather grimly, ‘it

will be the same thing as usual. In a year or two we shall be in some trouble, and then they will be paying inefficient Volunteers 5s. a day to try to do the work we have been taught to do, and paid for doing,’ and that is exactly what will happen.”

We returned to Basset Down, and later to London, as soon as he was well enough to travel ; but henceforth pain was a nearly constant accompaniment of his life.

With a courage that never failed, he still carried out political and other engagements, as far as he possibly could, and set himself to try to do what still remained to him of the work he cared for so much ; devoting such strength as was left to him to making clear, both in and out of Parliament, by speech and by pen, the dangers that he saw in the military policy to which the country has been committed. During the last three years of his life he wrote two books on Army Questions. The first of these—*The Army in 1906*—was written in 1906, and was published by John Murray. In it he described the Army that he believed to be required by this country and Empire, the means by which such an Army could be raised, and the steps taken towards this end during the period of his administration of the War Office ; and, further, it sets on record the steps that he believed still required to be taken, that he had not been able to effect, owing to his short tenure of office, and owing to the many difficulties that he had encountered.

CHAPTER XXI

A voyage to the West Indies—The Kingston earthquake.

FOR one slowly recovering from grave illness it seemed a peculiarly ill turn of fortune that a visit to the West Indies in the course of this winter should have led us to Kingston, Jamaica, at the very time when the great earthquake occurred. We were advised to try whether a long sea voyage to a warm climate would help Oakeley to get stronger. Sir Alfred Jones had asked us to accompany him on his next visit to the West Indies, and to be present at the Conference of the Imperial Cotton-growing Association. As he spoke of the wonderful climate and beauty of Jamaica and urged us to come out with him in December, Oakeley's eyes brightened, and we agreed that to sail away to sunshine, to blue seas, and to tropical islands, leaving the English winter far behind, would be the fulfilment of many a dream.

We left Wiltshire under a wintry sky, and deep under frozen snow, and embarked at Avonmouth on the *Port Kingston*, our son John accompanying us. For a week, under dark grey skies, we ploughed southwards and westwards across the Atlantic; for two days we were caught in the tail of a circular storm, and rolled heavily in rough weather; then, with the trade wind following, every day brought us to hotter suns and to bluer seas.

Our fellow-voyagers made a company unique in its way, and differing much from the ordinary chance gathering of seafaring travellers on board ship. The majority were travelling together for a definite and common object. Liverpool cotton manufacturers and experts were going out to meet the growers in the West Indies. Formal discussions were held on all questions affecting the growth and develop-

ment of the cotton industry, and the needs of the manufacturers. The great Conference that was to be begun at Kingston on the fatal day, January 14, was drawing, not only these men, but men from all the West Indian islands, to meet and discuss the present position and the future development of the cotton, and of the sugar, rubber, and fruit industries. Sir Alfred Jones, the leader of the party, had for years been devoting his life, his fortune, and his great experience to developing these sources of wealth in different parts of the Empire. There travelled with us representatives of the Colonial Office, and men who had had varied experience in Colonial affairs and Governments. Lord and Lady Dudley were also our fellow-travellers, and to their companionship our eventful journeyings owed much of their pleasure.

Jamaica was reached on the 11th of January. The story of our experiences there will be told in the two following home-letters written at the time, the first by me, the second by Oakeley:—

“CONSTANT SPRINGS HOTEL, KINGSTON, JAMAICA,
Monday, January 14, 9 o'clock morning, 1907.

“We have been in Jamaica for three days, but it seems much longer, for the days are so full of interest, and the delight of seeing a new world of beautiful things is absorbing. Our hotel is six miles from the harbour and town, high up on the lower slope of the blue mountains, which make an amphitheatre round us, and which are beautiful from dawn till night. It is a large and picturesque place, with tiled roofs and green jalousies. I am writing, sitting in a deep verandah looking towards the mountains. The garden is rather parched, as there has been no rain; little lizards are running about, a brightly-striped little bird, black and white, and some long-tailed black birds are hopping about near, a giant crow is hovering beyond. It is very difficult to tell which are dragon flies and which are humming birds, the pretty creatures seem much of the same size, and dart about as quickly. Just beyond the garden, with its orange trees, bamboos, palms, and pergolas of bougainvillia, there is a field of pine-apples in which darkies are working.

"The day begins early ; the best time for doing things is from seven to nine and after four o'clock. Early in the morning the sea-breeze freshens the land, then there comes a breathless time, very hot, till there begins the blessed mountain wind from the north, which is what keeps this place so delicious as to climate. It is certainly hotter in the middle of the day than any summer day at home, but the afternoons are so cool and fresh that one can greatly enjoy them, and one does not try to do much at mid-day.

"I stopped writing this letter to go down with Oakeley and the rest of our party to the opening of the Cotton Conference. As soon as it was over I made my way home, leaving Oakeley to lunch at the club, and to take part in the afternoon Conference. It was after two when I got back to the hotel, hot and rather tired, and after some lunch I went up to get a little rest in my room, Jack being next door to me. I dozed a little, when a great crash of banging windows and doors in a hurricane of wind disturbed me. I rested still, when suddenly the walls of my room began to rock violently with a lateral motion from side to side, and the floor seemed to rise up in waves to meet me. Great crashes of falling masonry and a curious roaring sound which I do not understand went on at the same time. Then my door opened and Jack came in, very composed and sensible. I was partly undressed. Another tremendous shock followed, and everything shook to its foundations. I finished dressing and seized my hat, and we took hands to run to the open. When we got into the corridor the whole ceiling and great beams, masses of mortar and stones blocked the way to the central staircase, and fresh stuff was falling, so we had to turn back again. Jack said he knew there was another little winding stair which led to the men's bath. We ran to that, and soon got down to the open. Lord Mountmorres met me ; he was very kind and helpful, and promised to send off a messenger to Kingston to get news, and to let them know that we, in the hotel at Constant Springs, were safe. The crowd on the lawn was very strange. Many had been resting and having a siesta, and all came out dressed as they were, in their night-dresses, dressing-gowns, or anything they had on. The women behaved

wonderfully well and calmly; only one man went off his head, but as he had been all through the San Francisco earthquake his nerves were shaken. The earthquake came in three shocks, beginning at 3.30 on Monday, January 14. The shocks continued, the intervals between getting longer, as long as we were in Jamaica. About sixteen occurred in the first twelve hours.

"Time seemed quite interminable before I got news of Oakeley. The first news was that the club where he lunched, and the Conference room, were both levelled, and no one saved. Then news came that Sir Alfred Jones's party were safe, but Sir A. himself killed. At last people came up who gave clearer accounts. Kingston, they said, was in ruins, fires breaking out everywhere, and the mortality terrible, but our party, they believed, safe. Jack and I waited together in the garden, very sad and anxious. Luckily we did not have to wait idly, for there came to us many people who had been hurt, and there was plenty to do for them, and for others who were almost distracted with anxiety and trouble.

"At the last we saw Oakeley himself driving up in a buggy safe and unhurt. It was a wonderful moment of thankfulness for us all. He had been at the Conference Hall and walked out with Lord Dudley, but had gone back to get his hat, his papers, and the letter that he was writing at the time for the *Times* about the Conference. It was long before he could get any vehicle, and at last only got a lift on the luggage seat of a buggy. After a time, the shocks having lessened, we ventured to our rooms to pack and put things together, lest they should possibly be looted or buried by some further shock. Packing was hurried, as you may imagine. I flung the immediate necessities and such things as I should need most, such as bandages, etc., into my handbag, and shuffled my clothes pell-mell into my boxes, my sealskin coat on top of my evening dresses, boots on top of all, everything just as it came. Then we lugged our belongings out to the iron staircase, and a stalwart negro helped us to get them down to the open, and we made a laager for the night with a couple of sofas, our boxes and bags, pillows, and one or two blankets; Oakeley and I and

Jack lying down together after we had had some bread and cold meat which was brought out from the hotel. Darkness fell almost immediately after sunset. The lawn was covered almost over with encampments like ours, and with a few improvised tents. The stars shone out brilliantly in the darkness of the night, and the great mass of smoke and flame hanging over the burning city lighted up the southern sky. It was the strangest night I ever spent. Glad thankfulness for our great mercies and deliverance, sorrow and horror for the awful doom of the city and its inhabitants, and over us all the peace and beauty of the wonderful tropical night.

"Early in the morning the Southern Cross hung just over the pall of smoke and fire that lay about Kingston. Then the encampments around us began to stir and awaken, and *al fresco* dressing and washing at the fountain on the lawn looked very funny. Some wounded people, who had been brought up, needed help, and I was soon very busy bandaging and washing; for we had no doctors and nurses, and one young fellow was badly cut and bruised from the falling of a wall, and had hardly a whole place from head to heel; the only thing to do was to cut off his clothes and wash him, and make bandages out of our sheets, and we soon made him more comfortable.

"Lord Mountmorres and Sir R. Moore and others organised shelters and food, and went up and down to Kingston and back to find out what we had better do. The day seemed long, though we were so very busy all the time. Sad news arrived constantly, and we learnt of Sir James Fergusson's death, of Mr. Nathan's (a fellow-passenger), of Mr. Constantine's death, and of the terrible havoc at the camp, where, besides all the other casualties, the hospital was burning. About 4 o'clock a message came to tell us that we were to go down to the ship, the *Port Kingston*, at once, and we put our things together and started in a buggy. The drive down the six miles was terrible, shattered houses everywhere; wherever brick or stone had been used the walls had simply smashed and fallen, and one looked into rooms with beds, chairs, and pictures intact, looking like a doll's house whose front was open. The roads in the town were blocked with

fallen masses of débris. Before we left Jamaica, these fallen masses smelt horribly, and the great vultures or crows hovered grimly over them.

"The *Port Kingston* seemed a place of refuge indeed when we arrived, and so did our familiar cabin with our swing cot and familiar fittings. Oh, the sense of security and peace it gave one! But the poor ship was still in great confusion; she had been used as an hospital throughout Monday night, hundreds of operations had been performed, sixteen had died on board, and they had only just moved the last patient out into the temporary hospital in the adjacent wharf. Directly we had had some tea, Lady Dudley and I went off to the wharf hospital, to take food and to look after the sick. Two cases were very bad, and the wife of one man sobbed, heartbroken, in my arms. We moved her husband two days later to the hospital in the town, and left him going on fairly well, and my poor friend more hopeful. Early on Wednesday morning, Lord and Lady Dudley and I started, with Dr. Evans, for the temporary town hospital, and spent all day there, coming back just to get food on board. We saw terrible things coming and going, and the state of the hospital itself that day was very sad. It is like three big compounds with low buildings round; these buildings are not safe, so all the patients were camped out in the open. The doctors were all working desperately hard, but the first days were terrible. The dispensaries have everywhere been levelled; no disinfectants, anaesthetics, or necessities were to be had, but this was soon improved upon. Whilst we were working in the women's division another earthquake shock shook the buildings, and the poor creatures clung to us, crying to the Lord for mercy, but very quickly collected themselves, behaving wonderfully well. There were so few helpers in comparison to the dreadful number of the hurt, that we had just to turn to and assist, even in the operations, and hold things and give the chloroform to the doctors. The poor creatures came in maimed and burnt almost out of recognition. Tiny children, without home or parents, were brought in for the doctors to do what they could for them. Night falls very quickly, and as darkness closed in, these poor little creatures wailed pitifully and

cried. I got soup and milk, and fed them, and we got a big mattress and blankets out in the compound, and tucked up all our little black children as well as we could, and they went off to sleep. One babe started singing to itself one of the negro hymns, and the other babes crooned it too, and fell asleep. We stumbled about in the darkness feeding the sick and giving what relief we could, and then home to the ship. Oakeley meanwhile had driven off to the camp to help and comfort the soldiers of the West Indian Regiment, who had suffered very severely. He looked very tired, and we were all thankful to go to bed after a short service of thanksgiving held by the Bishop on the deck. On Thursday, some of our fellow-passengers offered to row us round the wharfs to where the Myrtle Bank Hotel had stood. The Dudleys and I and Mr. Jesse Collings went, and the sight is one which can hardly be described. The shell of the building stood here and there, but most of it was a shapeless ruin. Sir Alfred Jones was in an upper room when the shock happened, and how he escaped was a miracle ; he says he just scrambled down the débris. The smell of the whole town is getting appalling, but relief parties are busy now clearing up and digging, getting the sewers into order, and mending the pipes and water-supply, so all will soon be better. Harbour Street, which, two days ago, was the Regent Street of Kingston, is levelled, buildings tilted in every direction, roofs shot out across the street. All last night great fires blazed in different parts of the town. To-day they are blowing up buildings so as to save others, and in some places still sadder fires are burning, where the bodies of the dead are burnt. The Governor is at work all day organising relief. Two American battleships have come in, and there is much feeling among our people that no English vessel is here to help ; for there was natural anxiety lest looting should become general, though so far the people have behaved so well. The Myrtle Bank Garden was a strange contrast to all the horrors around it, it looked so pretty and undisturbed ; the hibiscus flowering brilliantly and the palms making a pleasant green shade. We took some photographs and re-embarked, and then got a buggy and drove to the hospital again, after visiting our patients in the wharf

hospital. We have three earthquake babies in the hospital as well as other tinies. One mite of a few weeks old, as black as a little coal, was weeping sadly. It had been picked up in the street, and went to sleep in my arms as we carried round the food and oranges that had been sent by Sir Alfred Jones. My black piccaninny made all the patients laugh, even in their misery, and was a great help in cheering them up. They are so funny, they say such odd things. 'Oh, my white angel from cross the seas; God bless you, my white angel!' 'Mistress Forster, dear, never give away that black piccaninny; me come along with you, honey, and be your black maid and nurse the piccaninny!' I called my black baby 'Claudius,' and he was really very sweet. The passengers had given me eau de Cologne and clothes, etc.; all very welcome in the hospital. Some lovely stories could be told if one had time. One little boy, only seven or eight, was there with his mother and two other little ones. The mother's legs were broken as she was pinned under the fallen brickwork of her house; the little boy had scrambled back over the tottering walls and débris and had saved both the babies. He was very little hurt, and took me to see 'my babies,' and watched me feed them with great delight. Everard and Gerald de Souza were two other little brothers, very refined and sweet, both of them hurt, who lay holding hands on one mattress the first night I was in the hospital. When I fed them, they insisted on knowing my name; and, holding my hand, they said their prayers, praying for me very sweetly, and I tucked them up, and hoped to see them again. But on the next morning their people must have fetched them away, for they were gone, and I did not see them again. By Thursday, the hospital was getting much more into shipshape, and when we left on Friday we were happier about it."

Oakeley's letter to my father tells of his experiences:—

"Monday was the first day of the Conference, and at 11.30 we were all present at the Assembly Hall. The Governor opened the proceedings, and a series of complimentary speeches were made. At lunch time, Mary and Jack went out to Constant Springs Hotel, and I went over to

the Club to lunch with the Governor and other members of the Conference.

"Here Mary's story and mine part company. The Club is—I should say was—a brick building in the same street as the Conference Hall. Our party at lunch included the Governor, Lord Dudley, and Sir James Fergusson and Gerald Loder (former M.P. for Brighton), who had just arrived by the R.M. steamer from Panama.

"Sir James has always been a good friend of mine, and we had much pleasant talk. After lunch the Conference was resumed. As the subject under discussion was sugar and not cotton, very few members of our party, who, as you know, are principally interested in cotton, returned to the hall.

"I went back to my previous place in the corner near the platform. I cannot gather that there was any serious fall of the barometer, or any indication of coming trouble except a very strong wind which sprang up suddenly, and which was noticed by many people, though not by me, as I was in the hall. We were in the middle of a discussion upon sugar when the shock came. It came absolutely without warning—a bolt out of the blue. You will ask what it was like. Well, I should describe it as having something of a personal and vindictive element in it. It was as if some great malevolent beast had the earth in its jaws, and was shaking it to and fro with a fierce noise, half growl, and half roar. I am told there were three shocks. I did not distinguish them. In many places there was a rolling motion; I did not notice this. What I did notice was the crescendo of noise, caused, doubtless, by the falling buildings, and the rocking and shaking of the building. Perhaps you will ask what my first feelings were. I can tell you. First and instantly, I realised that it was an earthquake—that knowledge seemed to come intuitively. Then the thought came to me that this would be the end of the Conference, the break up of its good work, and the destruction of the growing confidence in Jamaica and its future—a great calamity. Then it occurred to me that the proper thing to do was to get outside. There were, I daresay, over a hundred people in the

hall, and only one door at the farther end, but I rejoice to say there was no crowding, no pushing. Every one played the game, as was proper for white men. Luckily, though much plaster and some bricks came down, the hall stood. The gate-posts fell, and two of the pillars of the portico were broken through, but, as I say, the hall itself stood ; otherwise, there would have been a great loss of life.

"It was not till we got outside that we realised how destructive the shock had been, for there we could see the fallen buildings on either side of the street.

"It was difficult to know what to do. I was, of course, principally concerned to know what had happened to Mary and Jack ; but it was six miles to Constant Springs, and though I am fairly well for me, I don't think I could have walked so far in the hot sun. However, I started off in the direction of the hotel, hoping to get a tram. But this was out of the question. Electric wires and telegraph lines were down everywhere, and every other house was a heap of ruins. The people, however, were behaving very well. A few women made shrill laments, and gesticulated, but the great bulk of the people in the streets conducted themselves admirably.

"I walked some way, and asked the drivers of one or two buggies if they could take me up. But, naturally enough, they had their own work to do. Finally, I sat down on the garden step of a ruined house, and fell into conversation with a white man who, I think, was the owner. He kindly brought me a glass of water, which was welcome. Finally, a buggy passed with two white men in it. I asked them if they were going in the direction of Constant Springs. 'Yes, they were.' 'Would they take me?' 'Yes; get up behind.' So I got up on the little ledge used for luggage, and there hung on. We started off, and were soon joined by a tall, strong young man who was running, and who asked leave to hold on to the buggy. He ran some way. Then we found that he had several miles to go to his home in the country, so we took him up and put him on the floor in front.

"You may imagine that we were an anxious party. The two owners of the buggy were partners who had been

at business in the city when the shock came. They were both longing to get to their homes. I had Mary and Jack to think of. It was not a good drive, but I was fortunate to have got the lift. Behind us great columns of smoke were already rising in the city; on every side were the fallen houses. The wooden buildings everywhere intact, the brick ones in whole or partial ruin. Luckily, in most cases the walls had fallen outwards, leaving the roof structures. Where the roof had come down there had generally been accident or death. We came first to the house of one of my friends. His family were on the lawn, and ran out to the gate to meet him. All was well; the house was damaged, but no one was hurt. A mile farther on my other friend was hailed by a man in the road, 'All well up at your place.' So there was another anxiety removed.

"At last, at a place called 'Half Way Tree,' I asked a man belonging to the tramway service how things were at the hotel. 'The hotel is all right,' said he; 'there has been a fall in one of the towers, but all the rest is right.' So there was comfort for me.

"We were now all relieved except a Mr. Capper, whose home was still ahead. I did not see him arrive, but I believe all was well with him too.

"At last I reached the hotel, and there, by the carriage drive, I found my beloved Mary and our dear Jack standing waiting for me. You will understand what a joy it was to meet them. During the whole afternoon there was much anxiety. Many members of the party had been in the town, and there was no news of them. Gradually, however, many of the missing ones found their way up, and many of those concerned were consoled.

"We made a little laager for the night on the lawn. All round us were other little encampments. We were lucky in getting some food, and all went to bed under the most beautiful starry roof I ever saw. . . .

"We woke early with the light, made such toilets as we could, and collected all the available news. Some of it was very sad. Poor Sir James Fergusson, with whom I had lunched, had evidently gone out into the street after

the first shock, and the walls of two houses had fallen on him. . . .

"Gradually news came to us of the fearful destruction in the town. . . . The weather, even for this season in Jamaica, has been exceptionally dry, and the fires which broke out immediately after the first shock spread with great rapidity. The whole business quarter has been burnt down,—banks, warehouses, and public offices, and very many persons have been burnt to death in the ruins.

"And here I think it will help to explain the situation if I say that in the open garden we were perfectly safe. It is no exaggeration to say that but for the over-confidence of man not a life need have been lost, not a pound's worth of property lost, as the result of the earthquake. The movement was a lateral one, from west to east, I think; and I don't believe it was a foot one way or another. In many places pillars have been broken in two and displaced for half their diameter, but have not fallen.

"There has been no tidal wave; there are no fissures in the earth; and, with scarcely an exception, the wooden buildings, the concrete buildings, and the little wooden and palm-leaf shanties of the negroes have stood. It is the stone and, above all, the brick buildings that have gone. Two hundred years of immunity have bred confidence, and people have forgotten that, after all, Jamaica is in the earthquake zone. The municipality of Kingston has actually enforced an ordinance for many years past, making the building of brick houses compulsory. Had it not been for this there would have been no disaster to record. The course of nature has suffered no interruptions. Not a grain of dust has been misplaced on the roads; not a twig has been bent on the trees; no bird or beast has died. Ten miles out in the country men did not know there had been an earthquake. Guests started to the Governor's ball on Monday night, not knowing that the Governor's house was in ruins, with only one habitable room left in it.

"During the afternoon news arrived that we were to go back to the ship in the evening, as all the patients would by that time have been removed, either to the

hospital or to Spanish Town. And here I ought to explain that the *Port Kingston*, being uninjured, and lying close to the burning wharves, naturally became the refuge of great numbers of wounded. In fact, for two days the ship was in the condition of a hospital after a great battle. Dr. Evans—Sir Alfred's own medical man—who has been acting as ship's doctor, rose admirably to the occasion. Over forty amputations took place in the saloon; and on deck there were many deaths, and terrible suffering.

"The ship's company behaved admirably—officers, stewards, and all doing their part magnificently in most trying and depressing circumstances. Many of them were quite worn out when the ship was at last cleared. About fifty of the firemen and sailors were sent ashore to act as police, and to prevent looting; so all were employed. I think we were all glad to get back to the ship, for she gave a promise of security; and glad we all were to see her big white bow towering up, and to climb over her side once more. Naturally there was a good deal of confusion still on board. Every one looked dog-tired; and the smell of the antiseptics and disinfectants was everywhere. However, we got a meal, of a kind; and were all very thankful, with much reason. The first thing on Wednesday morning came the announcement that the U.S. men-of-war were entering the harbour; and there they were, sure enough—the *Whipple* destroyer, which had come in during the night, and the *Indianian* and *Missouri*, big white battleships, which were slowly steaming up to their anchorage as I came on deck.

"It was a great humiliation that, for the first time in our troubled history, a British colony in distress should have found itself dependent upon foreign ships for its comfort and aid. And the humiliation became deeper as hour after hour, and day after day, we looked—and looked in vain—for a British ensign. It was not till 4 P.M. on Friday afternoon that the *Port Kingston* left the harbour. The earthquake took place at 3.30 on Monday. When we left, there were present in the harbour the American battleships (the *Whipple* had left), three German steamers (not counting two others which had stuck on the reef outside), and a Cuban passenger steamer. Not a single vessel flying the

white or the red ensign was in the harbour. If there had been an outbreak—as there well might have been—the town and island would have been absolutely dependent upon the protection of the foreigner.

“There could not be a more striking or greater condemnation of the new Admiralty policy. The withdrawal of the half battalion of white troops was right. Hardly any one here now objects to it. The Chief Constable, the Colonial Secretary, and others were all at one in approving. The three hundred and odd boys were of no use as a garrison, and were more than useless as police. The true course is to spend the money formerly wasted on the Militia upon a proper police force. This, I think, will be done.

“But the withdrawal of the ships is quite another thing. Moreover, it is a breach of faith. When I consented to take away the half battalion of infantry, leaving only the garrison artillery and R.E. for the forts, I specially stipulated that an adequate naval force should be retained. It was promised in the most formal way that—

“1. The *Indefatigable* or other ship, with 300 marines, should be stationed in the West Indies; and should be available in any emergency.

“2. That the *Diamond*, a 22-knot cruiser, should also be permanently on the station, and should be ready to proceed at high speed to any point where her services were required.

“3. That the cruiser squadron should constantly show the flag in the West Indies.

“All these promises have been broken. There are only 150 marines on the *Indefatigable*. Where that ship is I do not know. We left her at Barbados. The station instructions are that she should proceed at once to any place with which telegraphic communication has ceased. She had not turned up at Kingston on Friday night; she might have been there on Wednesday night.

“The *Diamond* is at Halifax, and has never been near the Islands at all. This is the result of this miserable policy of penny wise and pound foolish. I fear, too, that the presence of the U.S. ships, though kindly meant, has

been productive of harm. On arrival, they sent a proposal to land an armed party. By a most unlucky chance the Governor, who had been up and active for thirty-six hours, was taking a brief rest, and an underling committed the incredible blunder of accepting the offer. Two hundred armed men were, in consequence, actually landed. They were no more wanted than they would be in Swindon on a market day. The white troops, the West Indian regiment, and the police were perfectly competent to keep order if there had been any disturbance ; but there was none.

"Of course, as soon as the Governor was informed of what had taken place, he hastened off to the Admiral and requested him to withdraw the men. The Admiral was, naturally, in a quandary ; he would be blamed, he said, for landing men on British territory against the Governor's wish, whereas he had authority for doing so. Eventually, it was arranged that the party should remain for two hours, and then go on board again ; and this was done. But the whole episode was a most unfortunate one. I hope no harm will come of the whole incident ; but I fear there may be some very foolish writing about what has taken place, and what hasn't.

"The Americans were not the only arrivals on Wednesday. A big German steamer, trying to enter the harbour in the night, and unaware that the lighthouse had been smashed, was warned off by the lighthouse keepers with 'flares.' But the Germans are very crafty ; they have formed a ring to reduce the pilotage fees at Kingston, and have a little gang of pickets of their own, with which they communicate by private signal. They thought the 'flare' came from one of the non-Teutonic pilots, and paid no attention to it ; so bang they went on to the outside of the palisades, there to stay till a hurricane breaks the ship up. There are now two immense German steamers lying broadside on upon the shore within 500 yards of each other. They represent, I imagine, nearly three-quarters of a million of money. Another big German steamer only just missed the reef on Thursday afternoon ; she came safely to harbour.

"It was most reluctantly that I yielded to Mary and

gave up going to the hospital with her, but I felt that I had at any rate a clear duty to the soldiers. I was able to get up to the camp about two miles up the town. Things had been very bad there. Of the barracks for 1200 men, not one building is left in a habitable state. The hospital fell flat and then caught fire. An officer and 26 men were killed. Another officer was mortally wounded in the town. The Colonel's house was down, and I found the Colonel with other injured officers in tents in the garden of one of the quarters. I visited the various detachments. The poor R.E. women and children were all camped out under blankets. They only arrived from England a fortnight ago. I talked to many of the men, white and black. They have all been doing well. Then I went down to see the R.G.A. just coming in from Port Royal, which has become untenable. They lost only one man. I went out with the architect to Myrtle Bank Hotel to see if we could get bungalows built in the gardens. There will be room for a few, and these will be constructed at once. The hotel itself and the adjoining streets, or rather the place where the streets were, present an amazing spectacle of ruin. Why every soul in the hotel was not killed I don't know.

"Yesterday, I went out to the *Illinois* with an injured American, who was one of the many bad cases we have had lying in the wharf, close to the steamer, and whom we have been looking after. The poor fellow has had the most devoted attendance from his two brothers, who have tended him day and night. We got him safely on board the battleship, but his head is broken to bits, and I fear he cannot live. I had some talk with the American officer, and told him that their promptness in coming off from Cuba was much appreciated; that though I should have preferred to see British ships there, I was sure the presence of such a large, well-disciplined force would give confidence.

"It had been intended that the *Port Kingston* should leave on Thursday, but over ten thousand pounds' worth of her cargo remained on shore. To abandon it meant not only a clear loss to the Company, but a loss to all the shippers, most of them small men—and to all the labourers engaged in loading. So, after consultation, in which I spoke

strongly in favour of remaining, it was decided to postpone our departure till four o'clock on Friday.

"By this time the city had become very unpleasant. Some 500 people have been buried, but hundreds of bodies have been dug out of the ruins, their presence only betrayed by their decay. These bodies have been burnt in great fires at the street corners. It is said that the number so disposed of has already reached a thousand. This may well be so, but the figures are not certain. Unluckily, contrary to the ordinary rule in disasters of this kind, the first estimates of loss seem to have been very much under the mark.

"The burnt area, the Governor tells me, covers fifty-six acres. On the remaining portion, perhaps, one house in five is habitable.

"*Saturday 19th.*—We duly left at four o'clock yesterday, and are now steaming against the great N.E. track, wired *en route* for Barbados. I think a good many of us would have stopped in Jamaica if we had felt we could do any good by remaining. But it is pretty evident that, at present, we could do nothing. There is not a house in which we could live.

"Luckily, there is no food question as far as the poor people are concerned. The earthquake has been confined to three parishes; the railway is running, the resources of the island are unimpaired, and there is an ample supply of fruit for everybody. What we shall do on arrival at Barbados we do not know yet, probably we shall rest there a few days.

"I must repair an omission in my story without which it would be incomplete. On Wednesday evening we had a thanksgiving service for all hands on the upper deck of the ship. The Bishop of Barbados conducted the service. It was welcome to all, for the hearts of men and women had been much tried, and the singing in unison of the great hymns, 'The Old Hundredth,' and 'Now thank we all our God,' and the giving of thanks for our preservation, were a solace to all.

"I telegraphed to you on Tuesday, 'All well.' I hope this reached you, but all the cables have been broken, and I

don't know when our messages went off. I have borne the necessary exertion of the last few days very well. I have had some pain, but nothing I can complain of, and though I have not been able to do a tithe of what I wished, I have accomplished more than I expected.

"And now I must bring this long, long story to an end. Whenever it reaches you, it will bring you our best love.—Believe me, always yours affectionately,

H. O. ARNOLD-FORSTER."

At Barbados we left the ship on which so many eventful days had been passed, and stayed on the island for a week of much-needed rest, after the wearing experience we had been through. We journeyed on from Barbados to Trinidad, staying at Port of Spain with Sir Henry and Lady Jackson, and renewing with them a friendship which had been begun some years before at Gibraltar.

The loveliness of our surroundings in Trinidad, the forests, the flowers, and bright unfamiliar birds, the strange tropical beauty of the island and its climate, and its very nearness to the American continent, all make up parts of an experience that can never be forgotten. Though even in the midst of the wonderful beauty and charm of the island, I could never quite get over the sense of the dangers that were hidden there,—the malaria that is so common, a touch of which Oakeley caught there and never again wholly lost, and the deeper anxiety as to yellow fever, which broke out just as we were leaving Trinidad.

CHAPTER XXII

Letters to his sister—*English Socialism of To-day*—Some proverbs and some translations—Decision to retire from Parliament on account of failing health.

"M—— will have told you," he wrote to his sister in April 1907, "that I am better and that I have been getting some work done at last. . . . I think my speech in the House was good—though not well reported. I have no doubt the Bill¹ will pass, but with the modifications with regard to the Yeomanry and Volunteers which I have prophesied from the first. The upshot will be that while the regular Army, about which few people care, will suffer greatly, the Volunteers will remain really very much as they are. My impression is that there will be a compromise about the Militia. The Militia officers may be pleased for the moment because they will think they have gained a point in the game; but unless they consent to a radical change in their organisation no compromise can save the force."

In July he wrote again to her :—

"I wonder whether you saw my six letters on the Army Scheme in the *Standard* of the week before last. I hope you did, for I think they were good, and I know they were useful to my colleagues.

"The articles appeared in a number of papers—*Yorkshire Post*, *Birmingham Gazette*, *Liverpool Courier*, *Manchester Courier*, etc. So the closing and guillotining in the House of Commons did not prevent my saying what I meant to say. There is really nothing left of the original Bill now.

"Haldane told me the other day that he is going to abandon the reduction of the Horse and Field Artillery, to

¹ Mr. Haldane's Territorial Army Bill.

which he had so strongly pledged himself; and that he proposed to enlist 3000 artillerymen on a three years' term of colour service.

"The Militia, too, are to become short-service Territorial regulars. When I think of all the abuse I received for introducing concurrent long and short service enlistment, and for saying that the only way to save the Militia was to turn them into 'Short Service Territorial Regulars,' I rub my eyes. But I have not come quite to the end of my prophecies yet. There are two, if not three, more steps equally inevitable, which must be taken before long."

To the same, from Bad Nauheim, he wrote in September:—

"I have been watching the Hessian manœuvres round this place. They interest me greatly; but they make me more angry than ever with our absurd policy of military make-believe at home.

"This Army would simply eat up our County Council Territorial Army about which we talk so much, and for which we are maiming our tiny regular Army. Amateur soldiery in presence of the real thing is about as useful as amateur surgery in an operating room, or amateur sailing on the bridge of a flagship.

"I must say I am utterly sick about the whole Army business. If I thought that soldiers of experience believed in the new scheme I should be amazed, and I should not agree with them. But I could always comfort myself with the thought that the unanimity of professional men was an indication that I was wrong, or that, at any rate, there was a way—not my way—which others had found out, and which would ultimately lead to the goal we all profess to be in search of. But, alas! I have no excuse for cherishing any illusions of this kind. When I say that the soldiers do not believe in the new scheme, and only tolerate it because they believe it will come to smash, and that Conscription must follow, I speak not of what I think, or conjecture, but of what I know. The evidence is overwhelming and conclusive. I have pages and pages from nearly every officer of importance in the Army laying down the true principles of Army organisation. The opinions of which I have the

record are emphatic and unanimous. They coincide with the opinions of soldiers in every other country ; and they not only differ from, they directly, in clear phrase, and with unmistakable precision, contradict and condemn the opinions which are now put forward as those of our leading soldiers, and which are the foundations upon which this system is built up. . . .

"I am profoundly unhappy about the Army. It is not much use my talking or writing, at any rate just now. All I said would be put down to stupid motives, though in reality it would merely be the repetition of what I have been saying for twenty years. For a while the popular thing will hold the field ; but at what a cost ! Believe me, armies are not made in this way, and all the fine speeches in the world won't alter the fact. We are preparing for peace and not for war. Heaven help us if we find ourselves confronted with the latter, and have to rely upon our un-officered, fortnight-trained men."

"THE ABBEY GARDEN,
16th October 1907.

"Many thanks for your letter. It is next best—*longo intervallo*—to having yourself. I wonder when we are going to have you again? Don't you think that two or three weeks in town with an invalid brother would be very fitting?

"I have had two fairly good days ; that is to say, days free from acute pain. . . . Did you see a short article of mine in the *Standard* on Socialism? It has had a good reception, and seems to represent the views of many people. I have been asked to write more, and perhaps I may do so, as the article as it stands is merely a suggestion, and there is much that I should like to add. But I can't say I expect to do much writing just now. I ought to, for I have plenty of leisure. But I find that pain is a great enemy of work ; partly in its direct effect—for when I am in bad pain I can't work ; and partly because the long continuance of it is discouraging, and the energy to begin a bit of hard work is lacking. However, doubtless I shall improve in this particular."

The letters on Socialism that are here referred to were published in the *Standard* in the autumn of 1907, and were also made known to a very large newspaper-reading public in the provinces by the co-operation of Mr. Pearson and of Mr. Gwynne the editor of the *Standard*. Some months later, as the demand for them still continued, they were partly rewritten, and were published in book form by Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. under the title *English Socialism of To-day*.

These letters were the outcome of a course of reading which had long occupied Oakeley. He had for some time past been studying all the modern literature that he could obtain concerning the different types of Collectivist teaching that we group together under the common name of Socialism. During months when he was kept almost entirely to his bed and sofa he read much, and on this and on the other subjects on which he worked he made complete and carefully arranged series of notes.

It was his friend Mr. Maxse who suggested, when we came back to London after a visit to Nauheim in the autumn, that Oakeley should put into written form the facts that he had thus collected, and the conclusions that he was forming, as to the political importance and the tendency of the movement.

He was drawn especially to study the teaching that was being given by the Socialist leaders, because he had imagination enough to realise vividly how powerful and moving the appeal may be that is made by this gospel. Conditions of unequal opportunity and unequal happiness give to it its force. "It is an appeal made to the unhappy and the unfortunate," to those who have not known, or who have lost opportunities of hope and enjoyment, and it is because there are so many persons in this country who are included in these sorrowful categories that the teaching even of extreme Socialists is received and welcomed. But the pictures of the social conditions of England as they are painted in the Socialist books and Press are very misleading, and have the dangerous quality that half-truths often possess. They tell a part of the story, and a sorrowful part, but they do not tell the whole.

"It is lamentably true that the distribution of wealth in this country is grossly unequal—so unequal that it cannot be good for the body politic. It is true that there is great suffering and great poverty. . . . But it is not true that the majority of the people of this country are living in abject and hopeless poverty. . . . If many are incapable of making provision against evil days, there are many who can and do make such provision.

Above all, it is absolutely untrue to suggest, as so many Socialist publications do suggest, that there is a bitter and conscious class war being waged between two great sections of Englishmen. The sharp line of demarcation which they seek to draw between the capitalists and proletariat does not exist. There are infinite gradations with respect to wealth and opportunity and education throughout English society; and, common to every class of society, are the great qualities of love of country, sympathy with suffering, zeal for the public service, and an earnest determination to make government equal and just for all."¹

Any book on Socialism must necessarily begin with some definition of terms, for the name of Socialism is used to describe not one but several different things, and is applied to at least three widely distinct schools of thought and action. The Socialism with which this book is concerned is a thing quite apart from the theoretic Socialism of the philosophers, and from the municipal Socialism or corporate action which forms part of the organisation and machinery in every modern state, and in the widely extended area of municipal enterprise. The Socialist teaching with which Oakeley's book deals is the teaching that is being given to the people of England by the recognised leaders and active propagandists of the Socialist creed. It is a tangible and concrete policy which is being urged with great force and ability by such bodies as the Social Democratic Federation, the Independent Labour Party,² and the Fabian Society.

In making clear the nature of the proposals of the Socialist leaders for the regeneration of society, Oakeley confined himself strictly to the actual words used in the authorised publications issued or circulated by the two principal Socialist Associations, most of his quotations being taken from their authorised official "Programmes." The reforms that they suggest are detailed, and the Socialist promises examined. His aim in writing these chapters

¹ *English Socialism of To-day.*

² It is fair to state that the more extreme utterances of the Socialist press are not to be attributed to the I.L.P., and that their authorised programme stands on a much higher plane than that of the S.D.F.

was to prove that, for the evils that exist in our body politic, Socialism can never supply a remedy. He believed that if their proposals were fully understood and realised they would never commend themselves to the people of this country ; and that the more clearly they could be set forth in the actual words of their authors the less inclination there would be to adopt them. The object of his review was frankly and strongly critical. Having discussed what he believed to be these very dangerous and mischievous aspects of Socialism, he turned in his concluding chapters to the consideration of some points which are to be found in the Socialist programmes which stand in a different category, and which, however they may be eventually decided, will have to be carefully and fully considered upon their individual merits. And finally he dwelt briefly upon certain constructive suggestions which he thought contained the germ of a more permanent and practicable solution for some of the evils which we all see so clearly, but which it is so much easier to see than to remove. "The policy that has no ideals," he wrote in one of his early articles in 1885, "will never vivify or inspire a people." It was the principal if not the only virtue that he saw in Socialism that it professed to be actuated by a spiritual motive, and to depend for its accomplishment upon the acceptance of an ideal. Firm as his belief was that in its practical working Socialism involved much that was cruel, selfish, and impracticable, the fact that it had such an ideal gives it, he was convinced, a strength which it could not otherwise possess.

His own ideal and hope for his country lay in a future that he looked forward to, which he saw not as a shadow, or as a dream, but as a clear and living picture of what citizenship of the Empire ought to be made, and might become, to every individual citizen of it. In the gradual filling up, the consolidation, the wise direction and government of the Empire to which we belong, he saw "such a field of work and opportunity as has never been given to any other people since the world began. . . . Not to despair, not to deny our faith, but to try and level upwards, and to open to all the people of this country the opportunities which are now enjoyed by a few of them." This was his ideal and

hope—an ideal which will indeed never fully be reached, but an ideal to which we may at least come nearer and may gradually approximate.

The summer of 1908 brought to Oakeley some welcome relief from pain. He spoke once or twice in the House of Commons without ill effects. Knowing my anxiety, Mr. Alfred Lyttelton wrote to me of one of these speeches: "I must send you a word of congratulation on the fine and gallant effort of this afternoon. I must confess to have been most deeply moved to see the victory of the spirit over all obstacles; the contrast of the delightful full-blooded pride in the country and her noble past, the wide and precise grasp of the subject and all the continental illustrations of it, the prompt and stout courage in debate, with, alas, the still suffering look and bearing. But all the same this afternoon's feat does give me good hope. It is difficult to believe that it could have been accomplished unless there is a great reserve of physical strength which every such effort attests."

A few days later Oakeley wrote to his sister:—

"My best love and good wishes to you for your birthday. There is nothing in the world so precious as affection; how richly we have all been endowed, and how little other things matter when we old people can think of each other with just the same feelings as those which filled our little minds in that very far-off day when we were children.

"But the love of the aged ones is really better, more mature, more tried, more certain than that of the boys and girls. . . . Yes, I did speak in the House the other day, and the speech did very well. Nor was I any the worse after speaking. But I am under no illusion. I may possibly be able to speak on special subjects from time to time. But this is no good. I see quite clearly now—indeed, I think for the matter of that I have seen it from the beginning—that in public life there is no place for any one who 'rides on the step.' One must be inside, or outside altogether. So the sooner I get off the step the better. I can do no good. The process is not pleasant, and it is not easy to be a philosopher except on other people's account. But the facts are there, and there is no getting away from them. I am not

well enough to go on, and I am not going to be. Mercifully I am as a rule free from pain now. I can and do do many things that I like, and every one is heavenly good to me. So I have precious little to complain of. . . .

"Mary has told you that we went to the garden party at Windsor and enjoyed it, though I must confess I was rather tired by it. The papers record my presence at various other functions this week, but I have not really been to them."

It would be giving a very untrue and misleading impression if, in speaking as I must from time to time of the suffering which so changed the tenor of his life, the more cheerful side were to be left out of the picture. His natural and spontaneous gaiety lightened life for him to the very end, and brightened it for all those who lived with him. It was never really subdued even by illness or by pain. Few forms of courage are perhaps higher than the unselfish courage, which, having looked steadfastly at the future, and faced death and all else that can befall, still meets daily life under such conditions as Oakeley's, with unfailing cheerfulness and brave spirits. "Every heart that beats strong and cheerfully," Robert Louis Stevenson said, "has left a hopeful impulse behind it, and bettered the tradition of mankind." And there was in Oakeley much of the same sweet and gay courage that is so memorable and touching in the *Letters from Vailima*. That note of natural gaiety will always be remembered as most characteristic by those who knew him best.

One day in the summer of 1908, I amused myself by recalling various "saws and modern instances" together with various translations that he had made at different times.

In writing down these proverbs and the very free translations which were such spontaneous bits of his talk, they must inevitably lose something of their freshness; for dried fragments of talk, like dried flowers, give one but little impression of the pleasant waywardness of the original; but they may perhaps recall to those who knew him something of his gaiety and of the humorous fancy which came out in many of the skits and articles contributed to the *St. James's*

Gazette, and which played such a notable part in his talk, and in his appreciation and enjoyment of life.

Here are a few of the "proverbs" that I remember :—

"Half a loaf is better than no walk."

"The hound's meet is the fox's poison."

"He who drives fresh horses should himself be fresh," was suggested to console me for the tipsy driving of our charioteer. The experience of many London dinner-parties confirmed the truth of "The greater the gun the bigger the bore." And a "daffodil dinner" suggested "Lent-lilies are better than borrowed plumes."

The Paris hats of the pretty ladies whom we saw at Uriage gave us, "It is the last straw that makes the lady smart."

"Better a supper at the Ritz and contentment therewith, than a dinner of herbs in a two pair-back," seemed a timely inspiration when we were driving home after dining with friends who were trying, too strenuously for comfort, to lead the "simple life."

"Chacun à son gout" has been often quoted and appropriated since the day, long ago, when Oakeley used it to describe the varying forms of gout from which his friends in the House of Commons were suffering.

Mr. Chamberlain, when Secretary of State for the Colonies, was speaking in the House of Commons of the difficulties attending the construction of the Uganda Railway. Numbers of natives who were engaged in laying the line had been seized and devoured by lions. Oakeley, sitting at a little distance, wrote a hurried note to the friend who sat immediately behind the Colonial Secretary: "Ask J. C. to speak of it as 'The Lyons Mail.'" He told his sister this story soon afterwards, and she added to the natural history of the Uganda Railway by telling us that a ticket office had just been raided by elephants! "Oh," said Oakeley, "of course, they came to register their trunks!"

"You will travel with most safety by the Midland Railway" was an appropriate translation of "*Medio tutissimus ibis*," in a speech made to the Midland Railway.

"Un succès fou"—"a successful fool," and "facile princeps"—"an easy-going prince," were two of the last

of many such translations ; and on one of the last days of his life, when I described to him a lunch party, where the footmen in red plush knee-breeches and powder had been conspicuous—

“ Oh ! ” he said, “ if I lived in a palace my motto would be ‘ knee plush ultra ’—‘ no more powdered footmen. ’ ”

I find among my letters this note of his on the subject of motors :—

“ Who doesn’t feel the English language a failure when he has to speak of a petroleum motor car, an electric motor car, or a steam motor car ? Half the time these inventions are calculated to save is wasted in describing them. I offer you some useful, well-finished, working English terms. Thus : Petrol motor cars should be ‘ oil-wain ; vulgo—smell-wain, or stink-wain. ’

“ Steam motor cars should be ‘ steam-wain ; vulgo—puff-wain. ’

“ Electric motor cars should be ‘ spark-wain. ’

“ These terms are all copyright, but as I am persuaded ‘ they meet a felt want, ’ I have decided to bestow them on the public without any royalty, for the enrichment of our language and the happiness of our daily life. ”

How pleased he was when, as happened more than once to us, some jest contained in one of his short articles in the *St. James's Gazette* was remembered and quoted long afterwards by some one who had never known their authorship.

“ Yes, I remember how M. and I laughed over it together, ” said Oakeley, smiling.

In the course of the holiday journey which took us in July and August 1908 to the Dauphiné country, a part of France which we had never hitherto explored, and which had fresh charm for Oakeley, the following letter to his sister Florence was written :—

“ BOURG D'OISANS, 2nd August 1908.

“ . . . I thought much of dearest mother yesterday. She would have loved this mountain country, with its green Alps low down, half-way up, or on the top of the lower hills, and the great snow mountains towering up above. She loved the little fields with their little owners gathering their

crops into little carts a thousand feet above the valley. I remember how valiantly the dear one used to walk with us, with her straw hat tied down on either side of her soft beautiful face. What a long way off those days seem! and yet some of the pictures of them in my 'memory book' are among the dearest and brightest in my great and varied collection.

"We have now got to Bourg d'Oisans, a beautiful little town among the mountains. The light railway which comes up the valley from Grenoble ends here, and further communication is by the diligence road over the Col du Lautaret to Briançon. It is by this road that the French armies have so often passed on into Italy. The frontier line is now very strongly fortified, especially on the French side. I regard this place as my selection in opposition to Uriage, to which, I may say, I was driven by the pressure of the combined persuasions of M—— and W——. The two places are typical. Uriage, a gay haunt of fashion, much of it not altogether reputable, with its gaming-tables, its horse-racing, and its theatre, where plays of the very stiffest order are performed nightly, represents the preference of my wife and child. Bourg d'Oisans, looked down upon by the pure and eternal snows, fanned by the fresh air of heaven, and where the wearing of the flannel shirt bears eloquent testimony to the living of the simple life—Bourg d'Oisans represents *my* choice. So strangely and so sharply are tastes and sympathies divided, even in families apparently, and to the outward view, united.

"Please tell Mademoiselle —— that France is a delightful country, in which almost everything is perfect; but in which the inhabitants cannot make toast, and in which no chef, however eminent or however humble, can be induced to cook 'cock's eggs' for more than two minutes—which is deplorable. But despite these drawbacks, the country and the people are delightful."

During this journey we stayed for some little time at Briançon, where Colonel Frique, who was the Director of Artillery for the fortress and district, gave Oakeley facilities which greatly increased the interest of his visit. A fortress,

artillery store, and field guns had powerful attractions for him, and Colonel Frique's kindness and hospitality made our stay very pleasant.¹

It was always one of Oakeley's greatest pleasures to be given opportunities and introductions that enabled him to become acquainted with French people. Some of the acquaintances thus made grew into real and lasting friendships — friendships which made an additional reason for our almost yearly visits to France. His sociable habit of mind also made him love to draw chance fellow-travellers into talk, and some of the passing acquaintances he made were very interesting ones. I remember on that last journey in France how much he enjoyed the conversation of a young doctor from Tunis, of a Jesuit professor, of an eminent engineer, and of a village curé, and also the pleasant company of the French visitors at our hotel.

We returned to England after a short stay at Annecy, and a few days in Paris. Oakeley still continued well, and all who saw him in Scotland in the autumn were struck by his air of better health. The look of suffering which was often written on his face seemed so wonderfully lightened and lifted that these weeks seemed a time of welcome relief and sunshine. A few happy days were spent on our way south with Miss Arnold at Fox How, and with his cousin, Mrs. Whitridge, near Tring. The idea of avoiding a winter in London appealed to him at this time very strongly, and, wishing to have our son Mervyn with us, we took a little house near Watford, and let our London house for the winter months.

He wrote to his brother, Edward Arnold-Forster, in October :—

"It is not easy to tell you how much I value your letter. The announcement respecting my retirement which you saw in the paper was premature and unauthorised, but I have no doubt at all that the break will have to come, and to come soon.

"You absolutely interpret my feelings. It is, it must be, a great grief to me to give up my life's work, especially at

¹ In 1909 our friend Colonel Frique carried out the translation into French of Oakeley's last book, *Military Needs and Military Policy*.

a time when, in some respects, I feel more fit to pursue it than ever before. To say that I do not feel unhappy, and that at times I do not resent the inexorable fate, would be untrue. But I can say with perfect sincerity that the compensations and consolations which unite to temper this bitter wind are so great and so real that, if I do not bear my troubles with a light heart, I do not let them become an oppression to us. Among these consolations I place in the first rank the sympathy, the understanding, and the affection of the people whose opinion I care about more than anything in the world. You stand, and have always stood, so very high in that list that your letter is a real joy to me."

Very soon afterwards he spoke at Croydon for the last time. It was evident that the effort of addressing meetings had become a strain far too great to be continued, and as soon as a future candidate had been found in Sir R. Hermon Hodge, Oakeley's letter to his constituents was published, in which he explained the reasons of health which made it impossible for him to contest the seat again.

"Of course it is a great grief to me to have to give up Croydon," he wrote to his sister, "which means giving up Parliament. But I have looked the thing in the face for so long, and have so fully satisfied myself that I have no alternative, that the actual appearance of my letter comes to me rather as a relief than as an added bitterness. I should have made the announcement long ago had not my friends in Croydon been very anxious to be 'on with a new love' before they were entirely 'off with the old one.'

"I quite approve of the choice of Sir R. Hermon Hodge, who is a good friend of mine, a capital yeomanry officer, and a very pleasant fellow. . . . I agree with every word you say about the German Emperor's letter; it is the most unfortunate indiscretion; all the more to be regretted because I am certain that it accurately represents the mind of that odd, interesting man, the Kaiser, in one of its many kaleidoscopic phases. Another half turn and the pattern would change entirely, but for a moment it was really there. No good of any kind can come from the publication. To the possible evil there seems scarcely any limit. The

wisest man can only hold his tongue, and without ostentation wring his hands. The unwise, and their name is legion, and they include all the 'very clever people,' will give tongue each after his kind. Already we see the result in every capital. Most dangerous of all, perhaps, is that solid hatred which springs from well-meant overtures rejected; *spretæ injuria formæ*. The whole outlook is deplorable. . . . I hope you will read a series of articles which I have contributed to the *Standard*, and which has also appeared in various provincial papers."

"COLE KING'S, WATFORD,
14th Nov. 1908.

"We had a pleasant card from you to-day telling us that you have just finished *Spanish Gold*. We also have just come to the end of it, much to our regret. I wish there had been more of it. What a capital book it is—one of the brightest I have read for a long time. I can't say that my reading of late has been very extensive or very varied. My chief stand-by has been my *Memoirs of the Duchess of Abrantes* (Madame Junot), a work in no less than ten volumes. I am just beginning the tenth and last volume, and I shall part company with my dear, courageous Duchess with real regret. It is not everybody's book, but it is certainly mine. It goes through the whole of the great Buonaparte drama in a way that fascinates me. To my mind it is far more effective and dramatic than a book like the *Dynasts*, which assumes that there is a drama and then proceeds to describe it. Madame Junot describes it from her standpoint—the standpoint of a very clever, bright-spirited woman, and the drama and the tragedy unroll themselves with the force and fatefulness of a Greek play. The Duchess's relations with the Buonaparte family are very curious, and give a peculiar interest to the book. Lieutenant Buonaparte, the young unlicked cub that was to develop into so formidable a wild beast, was a sort of tame cat in the house of Madame Perman, Madame Junot's mother; he was sheltered by the Permans, and borrowed money from them with shame in his heart for having to do so; and, strangest of all, according to Madame Junot,

proposed to and was rejected by Madame Perman, a rebuff he never forgot, and never quite forgave.

"I have been rather full of aches and pains during the past week, and have been able to do very little. But I have not been altogether idle, for I am about to bring out my *Standard* articles on the Army in book form; and as I am rearranging them, and nearly doubling the text, this gives me plenty of occupation. Smith & Elder, I hope, will publish it. I was pleased the other day to meet Lord Roberts, who was most friendly about my work, telling me how good he thought it was, and how much he agreed with me. 'There is very little difference between us,' he said. And this is true enough.

"I had a talk with Arthur Balfour about the taxation of Land Values. I think great pressure will be put upon the Government next year to do something violent in connection with this. They are so restless, and in such a mess about money, that there is no knowing what they may consent to; though, as a matter of fact, there is no money to be made out of such a scheme. I said that my fear was that some legislation should be passed, which, once passed, like the death duties, would be irrevocable. That would be a great calamity; and to guard against it we ought to be prepared beforehand to deal with the case, which is a complicated one. I wanted to know what line he (A. J. B.) proposed to take. He said he was opposed to the suggested taxation. I said if that were thoroughly understood we could go ahead, but it was no use working unless we knew we were advancing in the right direction. My own view, I told him, was that we should unite on one or two big principles, viz.:—

"1. That no taxation should affect existing contracts.

"2. That the principle of betterment should only be adopted concurrently with the principle of *worsement*, or deterioration.

"Both these propositions are essentially just, and the adoption of either knocks the bottom out of any scheme the Government is likely to propose.

"You will laugh, perhaps, on reading all this story, at the idea of my taking so much interest in what is going

to happen, and indeed it is rather absurd, for I am no good, and can do practically nothing myself. But there it is, as long as I remain in the House, I can't help taking advantage of every opportunity that offers. . . . Your affectionate brother."

Oakeley was occupied through the winter in rewriting and enlarging the letters on the Army which had appeared in the *Standard*, and of which our friend Mr. Reginald Smith had undertaken the publication in book form. He was writing a fresh chapter for this book when a severe illness interrupted all his work.

His book, *Military Needs and Military Policy*, was published in March 1909, in the week in which he died. It was written under circumstances of great difficulty and acute suffering. To this book—the last of a long series of Oakeley's writings on our Army—the next chapter is devoted.

CHAPTER XXIII

“On ne badine pas avec la guerre.”

Military Needs and Military Policy—Last Book on Army affairs—Lord Roberts' Preface—The question of invasion—The Territorial force—The Special Reserve—Compulsory service—A summary of the results of the Army policy of the present Government.

Military Needs and Military Policy is the second of the two books that Oakeley wrote during the last three years of his life—after he left the War Office.

The earlier of these books, the *Army in 1906*, has already been spoken of in a previous chapter. *Military Needs and Military Policy* was written with the object of convincing his fellow-countrymen that the military policy which Mr. Haldane had embarked upon, was a policy which made it impossible to secure such an Army as Oakeley believed to be required by this country; and to show that the regular Army had been weakened by the measures taken since 1906; and that the Territorial Army which had been provided, and which had been so greatly extolled, is, by its nature, unfitted to fulfil our needs.

In the introduction which Field Marshal Lord Roberts contributed to this book, he says:—

“The greatest source of danger to this country lies in the extraordinary indifference of the rulers—in other words, the general public—to the problems of national defence. The tendency to forget the lessons of past events, as soon as these events are over, seems to be almost irresistible. Nothing, apparently, but absolute disaster is likely to cure us of the inveterate belief that, somehow or other, we are exempt from all the laws which have governed the rise and fall of nations, and can always rely upon some miraculous interposition of Providence to see us through the hour of danger. The whole mechanism of our public life tends, even in the case of those interested in military affairs, to an unconscious acquiescence in the plausible self-deception which persuades us that, if we can successfully carry out this or that particular scheme—devised with no regard to our strategical needs,—we

have solved the problem of national defence, and exorcised all dangers from our path.

It is these tendencies which Mr. Arnold-Forster has set himself to combat in the present work. Into the purely controversial issues raised in it I do not propose to enter. But I can wholly echo Mr. Arnold-Forster's insistence on the supreme importance of maintaining at the very highest standard both the strength and efficiency of our regular Army. England may be an island, but the empire is a Continental Power with vast land frontiers in India and in Canada which have to be defended, and for the defence of which we must, in the main, look to the regular Army. That the regular Army should be strong in numbers and efficient in training, that it should be wholly available for its oversea duties, and that it should be capable of great expansion in war, these, to my mind, are primary conditions, the necessity for which cannot be too strongly insisted upon. . . . The question at issue is not whether the Territorial Army will attain the standard which Mr. Haldane has set before it, but whether it will fall short of the standard by which it will be measured on the field of battle. Amateur artillerymen may make remarkable progress in a fortnight, but the enemy's shrapnel makes no allowances. This, I apprehend, is the whole gist of Mr. Arnold-Forster's criticisms, and for that reason this book is deserving of the careful consideration of all who are interested in the vital problem of national defence."

No more accurate description of Oakeley's purpose in writing his book could be given.

What the actual military needs of the country are—Whether our present organisation is the one best fitted to meet them—these were the main questions that he desired to set out.

There is a certain divergence of view as to the nature and extent of the dangers that we have to guard against; but on one point every one is agreed—namely in believing that this country may be involved in war over sea, and for any war over sea we must rely in the future, as we have done in the past, upon our regular Army acting in conjunction with the Navy. On this we are all agreed, but directly we go a step farther than this, we find ourselves face to face with a great difference of opinion.

"Some persons believe ¹—and I admit I am of the number—that provided the Navy be maintained in a proper state of efficiency, the danger of invasion is not one which need be contemplated.² . . . There

¹ *Military Needs and Military Policy.*

² "This principle" (that the Navy itself at its present strength is capable of defending us against invasion) "is," said Mr. Haldane, "the principle of the Government, it is the principle of the Defence Committee, it is the principle of

are others who hold that, although what is called an 'invasion in force' is not to be anticipated, attack by a limited number of selected troops, arriving in ships which will have eluded the vigilance of the fleet, may succeed in landing on our shores and doing great mischief. The party which believes in 'raids' of this kind is a considerable one, and the theory has at times received official recognition. It should be said, however, that there are also many persons who believe that the same considerations which apply to the case of invasion, apply to the case of a raid, and who think that the true and only protection against a landing of any kind is the Navy. They do not all assume that the Navy is at the present moment adequate to afford the necessary protection, but they take the view that, if it be not strong enough, the proper course is to make it stronger, and not to spend money and energy upon the multiplication of land forces, which will be more costly and less effective than destroyers or submarines. . . .

It is not necessary, for the purposes of the present argument, to combat, or even to question, the correctness of the views of those who believe in invasion, or of those who limit their belief to the possibility of raids. It is not my object to take part in what bids fair to be an endless controversy, but to demonstrate that, while we at present fail to provide against the one danger as to the existence of which all parties are agreed, and are permitting incalculable injury to be inflicted upon the regular Army, we are doing nothing whatever to cope with either of the two perils, about the existence of which there is, indeed, some doubt, but which a very large section of the community believes to be real and pressing.

While, however, I propose to accept, for the purpose of my argument, two propositions which I believe to be unsustainable, and to assume that an invasion of this country is possible, and that a raid is not only possible but probable, I think it just to point out that there is no evidence whatever that these views are accepted by the Government or by the Committee of Imperial Defence. . . . On the theory that no port will ever be attacked, that no troops will ever be landed, that no hostile shot will ever be fired upon British soil, the Admiralty have deliberately destroyed the elaborate and perfect system of mine defences constructed with admirable skill by the Royal Engineers. They have wholly or partially dismantled the few forts we possessed; they have allowed the land defences of the great naval ports to be abandoned. . . . In other words, the Navy has definitely committed itself to the view that no landing is possible; that by naval means, and by naval means alone, can an enemy be prevented from setting foot upon our shores. . . . If in the opinion of the Admiralty there were the remotest chance of an armed force landing in the neighbourhood of our great ports, the policy they have followed would be almost criminal. Meanwhile the Army Council . . . are acting on the hypothesis that the Admiralty are entirely in the wrong . . . ; they are spending £4,000,000 a year not to prevent a landing, but to neutralise its effects after it has taken place.

the Navy, it is the principle of the Army Council, it is the principle of the present Government. . . . We have bed-rock fact here for the organisation of our defences."—Hansard, 8.3.06.

On this point there is no room for doubt. To enlist 300,000 men and boys, who, in the event of war, are by the terms of their engagements and by the law of the land tied to the soil of this country, would be a crazy performance if its authors did not assume that fighting in this country was not only possible but probable.”

If we seriously face the question of how an invasion once effected may be defeated, “there is only one conclusion at which reasonable men can arrive.” “An invading Army of picked Continental troops,” wrote Lord Roberts, “cannot possibly be repelled by a scratch force whose training and organisation are based, not on the principle of efficiency, but on that of individual convenience.”¹ Or, in Oakeley’s words, “If we are going to be invaded we must do what other nations which are confronted by the same danger are compelled to do. . . . We must arm, we must train, we must prepare, and we must pay like other people. The man who believes in invasion believes in conscription . . . he cannot believe in the policy which is destroying the regular Army in order to create the Territorial force.”

But it has often been contended that if the Territorial force cannot be relied upon to protect us against an invasion in force, it will guarantee us against raids. If this is really its object, it is, he contended, “the most curiously unfit instrument that has ever been devised for such a purpose.”

“The problem is to defeat a force of highly trained, well-organised, and well-equipped regular troops, who, as the result of a surprise, have been landed upon our shores. The attack will be sudden and unexpected ; clearly, therefore, the force which is to resist it must be one that can move instantly, which need not wait for mobilisation, but is ready to take the field at twelve hours’ notice. The hostile force being composed of picked men, very highly trained, and under carefully selected officers, the force which is to meet and beat it must be superior to it in numbers, and at least equal to it in physique, discipline, and training. The purpose of the Army being to strike a very heavy blow in a short time, the force which is to prevent it from striking that blow must be at or near the point at which the enemy is likely to strike.

¹ Preface to *Military Needs and Military Policy*.

"With which of these necessary conditions does the Territorial force comply? The answer is that it complies with none of them."

"*The Territorial force is not ready*, and by the very conditions of its existence never can be ready in case of a surprise." (Mr. Haldane has told us repeatedly that the Territorial army must have six months' continuous training before it could have a chance of competing with a disciplined army.) The force which is to meet and defeat the enemy must be able to march at twelve hours' notice. Yet everybody knows that there is not a regiment or a battery of the Territorial Army which can do anything of the kind.

"*The force which is required must be more numerous than that of the enemy, and it must be of at least equal quality.*"

We do not know what the numbers of the Territorial Army are eventually going to be, or what proportion of their nominal total will ever be available in any time or place, but if we assume a superiority in numbers, the force which we could get together would eventually be inferior in training, organisation, and command. "The new organisation of the Volunteers is an undoubted and great improvement upon the old, but it cannot achieve the impossible, and it is useless for the purpose of securing rapid mobilisation and immediate fitness for war." Feeling thus strongly about the danger of the policy to which the country has, during the last few years, been committed, it was inevitable that Oakeley should feel strongly about the action of soldiers who, in direct contradiction of previously expressed and officially recorded opinions, were ready to lend their support to the system, on the plea that it was no part of the duty of military officers, entrusted with the responsibility for the Army, to question the expediency of the policy which they might be directed to carry out.

"The sorrowful part of the business," he writes, "is that those who ought to be the foremost in telling the truth are in many cases foremost in encouraging the delusion. There are many soldiers in this country who know the truth perfectly well. Nay, more, there are many who, both officially and privately, have stated those truths

with a force and conviction which are beyond criticism. But how rarely do we see any one of those experienced officers giving to the public the inestimable advantage of his knowledge? It need hardly be said, that this reticence, whatever its cause, is greatly to be regretted, because it encourages and strengthens the belief of an uninstructed public in certain propositions, which are as unfounded as they are dangerous."

Besides, the chapters which deal with the regular Army and with the Territorial force, another chapter in Oakeley's book deals with the question of compulsory training and compulsory service. It was his own belief that our one great military need, next to the maintenance of a powerful Navy, is the need for strengthening the regular Army, and for increasing its reserve-making power. But there is a large and growing number of people who believe that something more than a great Navy and a highly efficient regular army, capable of great expansion in time of war, are required to guarantee our safety, and who believe that compulsory service or conscription, or compulsory training in some form or other, is necessary for this end.

The ideal of national duty thus taught is one so honourable, and based on so true a conception of citizenship, that Oakeley approached it with great respect and with a real desire to find opportunities of agreement rather than occasions of difference with those who advocated it.

Numerous and influential as are the advocates of a universal military training, it is, he believed, very doubtful whether, without compulsory service in time of war, compulsory training would be of any great military value to the country.

In his view, the teaching of history proves that men who do not undertake during peace time to serve in time of war, cannot be relied upon to assume that obligation when they are most needed, and the inference that he drew from the experiences of the past was that "the corollary of national training is compulsory service," and this corollary many earnest and capable men accept as inevitable.

If we accept the possibility (a possibility which he did not himself admit) that this country may have to resist

an "invasion in force," then, and then alone, he believed, compulsory service to be not only reasonable but inevitable.

"If we are to be exposed to the dangers which threaten continental nations we must take the same precautions as other nations have adopted. . . . To begin with, we must have an immense corps of officers and N.C.O.'s. We must have grown men in the ranks, and those men must receive an amount of training which will enable them to meet and defeat the enemy. There may be many opinions as to what the character of this training ought to be. But unless the military authorities of every other country in the world are wrong, and we alone are right, it ought to bear no resemblance whatever to that which we think sufficient for our Special Reserve and our Territorial force. To begin with, we must enlist men—not boys. . . . It is only the manhood of this country that can hold the field against the manhood of another nation. The period of initial training must greatly exceed that which is considered sufficient under the make-believe system."

It is a training, military and physical, of the kind given to the great continental armies that we must adopt if we are seriously to adopt national service. "A training that improves the physique of the people, which inculcates habits of discipline and order, which exhibits obedience to lawful orders and self-sacrifice for a common ideal, as virtues, must be good for a nation."

That it has grave disadvantages and can produce some great evils will not be denied. Opinions will always differ about it.

"My own opinion," wrote Oakeley, "is that even gold may be bought too dear, and that unless it is absolutely necessary for the nation we are on the whole better without it. But the main point to bear in mind is that while the real thing may be of value in more ways than one, the make-believe variety must always be an unmitigated curse."

Compulsory service in any form must involve a great expenditure. Unlike other countries, we must always have two armies,—the regular Army for oversea service, the Navy maintained as it is at present, and in addition, we should have a vast conscript army tied to the soil of this country. Nor

can any saving be effected in the cost of the regular Army, for the necessity for maintaining it, and its reserves will, as Lord Roberts has pointed out, remain unaltered, and compulsory service or national training gives us no help towards the greatest of our military needs, the expansion of the regular Army for service oversea; no one as yet having come forward to advocate conscription for oversea service.¹

The vast cost of what would be a twofold Army seemed to Oakeley a most formidable obstacle.

“I do not myself believe,” he concluded, “that this country can or will bear the cost of an adequate Navy, an adequate regular Army, and an efficient conscript or national service Army. I greatly fear that in the attempt to obtain these three objects, we may find ourselves left with an inadequate Navy, an inefficient regular Army, and an inefficient and useless conscript army. . . .”

Anxious as he was to understand and meet the views of the advocates of compulsory training and service, he could not convince himself that the remedy that his friends proposed was the one most appropriate to our needs. Those, however, who on this most difficult subject differ from his view, and have come to a conclusion with which he could not agree, will acknowledge that years of thought and study had gone to his study of Army problems, and that in all that he wrote and said he was inspired by a deep sense of public duty, by a great love for the Army, and by the single-hearted desire that the Army should be made and kept strong and efficient for the country's needs.

His book was published in the week that followed his death. A soldier who had known him well, and who had worked with him, wrote of it:—

“It is a final appeal to the common sense of the British public; a call to them to throw off the lethargy which has bound them when matters so vital to their defence and future existence have been at issue. It is a last appeal to all who have the interests of their country at heart that they should constitute themselves the judges on the issues

¹ A suggestion made by his friend, Mr. L. S. Amery, was, in Oakeley's opinion, the most practical of all the proposals for compulsory service that he had seen, and he was greatly struck by it, and often alluded to this plan.

to which he devoted the few last months of his strenuous life. In his own words 'he has laid the evidence before them, wishing for no better jury than one composed of impartial readers who, discarding any question as to the merits or demerits of the advocates on either side, will give their verdict according to the evidence.'

"The British nation has proved itself generous, even lavish, in the erection of monuments to the memory of its sons who have died for their country. Those who were privileged to work with Arnold-Forster during the last few years of his life know full well that no soldier who met death on the battlefield can ever have given his life more consciously or bravely than he did in his country's service. It is to ask but a small return of those to whom his last book was dedicated—his countrymen—that they should read, and consider carefully for themselves, the case which he spent his last year of life in preparing for their verdict. If but a tithe of those who profess a patriotic care for the future of the British empire will spare a short time for the perusal of his last book, I am sure that the tribute to his memory which he would personally most have desired will be forthcoming, in the future reality of the measures which will be taken to render our land forces efficient for the work for which they are maintained—'To gain the victory in any war in which the empire is likely to be engaged.'"

At the end of *Military Needs and Military Policy* a table is given showing the relative strengths of the various branches of the Army Service in October 1905 and October 1908 respectively. The summary which here follows brings the comparison as far as possible down to the present time, though the date of publication has prevented the inclusion of the figures for October 1910.

I

In 1910 the strength of the REGULAR ARMY is less than it was in 1905 by (approximately) 18,400 officers and men.

In October 1905 the strength was 186,177 N.C.O.'s and men; 7895 officers.

In the estimates for 1910 the *establishment* was given as 170,887 N.C.O.'s and men ; 7776 officers ; the present strength being about 3000 men and 100 officers short of these establishments.

II

In 1910 the strength of the SPECIAL RESERVE is less than that of the Militia in 1905 by 18,408 N.C.O.'s and men ; and 575 officers.

In October 1905 the Militia numbered 85,814 N.C.O.'s and men ; 2448 officers.

In March 1910 the Special Reserve numbered 67,406 N.C.O.'s and men ; 1873 officers.

A very large proportion of this total of 67,406 consists of men who have been transferred from the Militia to complete their terms of service. For instance, in the Special Reserve Infantry, out of a total strength of 55,823 (March 1910), no less than 30,981 were transferred Militiamen, who will soon become time-expired. Of the remainder a large proportion consists of boys under 20, who would not be fit for service abroad.

On October 1, 1908 (the latest return available) the number was 16,444, and this proportion will increase as the men who have been transferred from the Militia complete their terms of service. The Special Reserve is (March 1910) 1183 subalterns short of establishment.

III

In 1910 the strength of the TERRITORIAL FORCE is about the same as that of the Volunteers and Yeomanry in 1905.

Volunteers and Yeomanry, October 1, 1905, 275,474 all ranks.
Territorial Force, October 1, 1909, 270,041 all ranks.

IV

In 1910 the REGULAR RESERVE, in consequence of the Short Service enlistment opened by Lord Midleton, will reach its maximum strength, 121,754 (exclusive of Section D). But its future condition gives cause for grave anxiety.

In order to maintain the Regular Reserve, and at the same time to furnish the foreign drafts, the experiment was started in 1905 of concurrent enlistment for long and short service. This was stopped by the present Administration on the change of Government in 1906, and Long Service enlistment (7 years and 5 in the Reserve) adopted for the Army, thus reverting to the system which had already been proved

by experience to be inadequate to furnish a sufficient Reserve in time of war.

Furthermore, the establishment of every Home battalion has been reduced (thus making smaller reserve-producing units, and increasing the demand for Reserves).

And lastly, nine reserve-producing battalions have been destroyed.

As a result of these steps the Regular Reserve will be greatly reduced.

In Appendix C of a memorandum issued by the Army Council in June 1909, it was stated that between January 1, 1906, and April 1, 1909, the gross number of officers and men liable for foreign service increased by 107,025. This number is obtained by the inclusion of the whole of the Special Reserve—the Militia being excluded from the figures for 1906 in this comparison—on the ground that it was not liable for foreign service. In practice, however, the Militia always volunteered for foreign service, and a Bill to make this obligatory for the force was passed by the Lords and introduced in the Commons in 1905. The remainder of the increase is due to the addition of 36,615 regular reservists in consequence of the Short Service enlistment opened during the South African War. Since the publication of this memorandum opportunity has been given to members of the Territorial Force to accept liability for overseas service.

CHAPTER XXIV

"Our life is but a little holding, lent
To do a mighty labour."

Vittoria (G. MEREDITH).

Grave illness, November 1908—A stranger's letter—Last words in the House of Commons—The Special Reserve and the Army—Last Days—March 12, 1909.

WHEN in November 1908 the illness began which so interrupted the writing of *Military Needs and Military Policy*, we had come up for a few days to a London hotel. The autumn session of Parliament and other engagements had made it necessary for Oakeley to be occasionally in London, and he came up fully intending, if possible, to take part in the debates in the House.

This attack of illness was so sudden and severe that we were obliged at once to move him to a nursing home. Weeks of great suffering followed, through which he was helped by the skill and devoted care of his friend Dr. Henry Huxley. Oakeley never seemed to lose patience, and his ready gratitude for any help given to him was very touching to his nurses, and to all who served him.

One day, when the pain had been so long continued and so severe as to tax even his great habitual fortitude, he looked up to me with a strange expression, that was almost triumph in his face, and he said, "I do not know if I can explain it to you; I do not know how or why it is. It is all a great mystery, but I do know that this terrible pain is somehow making me better. It is good, and I would not spare or undo now what I have gone through."

He told me early the same morning that he had been reading certain psalms and prayers that his mother had used and loved. The spirit was much stronger than the frail

body, and seemed to shine through and master it. He liked me to read aloud to him for as long as possible in the day, and I read him many books. On one day of his illness he was cheered by Lord Roberts's kind letter, promising a preface for the new book ; the letter and promise gave him great pleasure.

When he was a little better we moved him by ambulance to the house of my cousin, Miss Moggridge, under whose kind care, and in whose quiet and sunny house, he made a more rapid recovery. Our sons joined us there, brightening and cheering Christmas for him, our youngest son, Christopher, arriving from Gibraltar in the *Albemarle*. In January, as our own house in Westminster was still let, we took a little house in Hereford Square, temporarily, until we could return to the Abbey Garden, and there, and at Basset Down, the last two months of his life were spent.

The Wiltshire air seemed for a time to give him fresh strength, and to restore him as it had often done before. However ill he might be, he used always to feel that if he could but be moved to Basset Down he would soon get better ; and again and again the high clear air of the Downs seemed able to work this miracle for him.

Before settling down again in London he was very anxious to see for himself, with his own eyes, the actual conditions and training of the Special Reserve soldiers in their depots. With this object he made a short motor tour, which enabled him to visit several of these depots. It had been the habit of his life thus to see for himself ; and, whether it was ships and dockyards, or whether it was the armies of the continent, or the men, guns, and stores of our own Army, this practice had been steadily followed, and gave to his statements an authority which no hearsay information could have given them.

We returned to London, and he took up some of his work again, and was able to see many of his friends, though he had generally to receive them lying down on his sofa. His much-loved cousin, Mrs. Wodehouse (now Lady Sandhurst), was a frequent visitor, and many friends came from the House of Commons. He was presently well enough to dine out occasionally, and enjoyed this nearly as much as

ever, though he was so quickly tired that I lived always with the fear of his bringing on pain by over-exertion.

A letter written by one who was a stranger to us, who visited him during a previous illness, when he was confined to his room at the Abbey Garden, gives, it seems to me, a very vivid and true picture of him as his friends saw him, of his eager, quick talk, and of his wide interest in books and men:—

“All the obituaries of Mr. Arnold-Forster which I have seen,” wrote this correspondent of the *Liverpool Courier*, in March 1909, “lay heavy stress upon his vehemence, his occasional ‘waspishness,’ and constant habit of acerb criticism. But it was a precisely contrary impression that I carried away when I had a private interview with Mr. Arnold-Forster some eighteen months ago. The illness which had been steadily undermining his strength for some time past was just then especially malignant, and he was a close prisoner in his house at Abbey Garden, all outside activities forbidden, but when he learned the nature of my errand (which was a purely literary one) he brushed his doctor’s orders on one side, and received me with extreme graciousness. He was too weak to rise from his couch, and the hand with which he welcomed me was as white and delicate as a woman’s; but his fine blue eyes were full of eagerness, and his talk was agitated and swift-running. It was almost wholly bookish talk, but it was very living none the less; the talk, that is to say, of a man to whom literature was a real and vital thing. There was nothing ‘stuffy’ about it, nothing pedantic. It began with modern French fiction (a yellow-back lay on the floor beside him, I remember), and flashed vividly about from point to point—from twentieth-century journalism to the Elizabethan drama, from books for children to the philosophy of Mr. H. G. Wells and the art of Mr. Henry James.

“It was good talk, full of delicate charm and graciousness, and full, too, of a fine intellectual humility and *bonhomie*; and I came away with a singularly pleasant picture—although a picture not altogether untouched by pathos—of the prisoner scholar lying there in his great guarded room, bearing his ill-fortune with a fine cheerful-

ness, and following with a catholic sympathy every new literary sally and adventure. And the room itself, and the whole house helped to complete that impression of a delicate and sweet-tempered monasticism, for its windows looked out across the mists and mild colours of an autumn garden to the lawns and cloisters of Westminster Abbey itself, and in the roadway which leads to it—one of the most silent and secluded streets in all London, in spite of its closeness to the racing piston of an Empire—the leaves were quietly floating down through the soft October sun. No, it was not of Arnold-Forster, Secretary of State for War and scolder of Parliaments that I found myself thinking as I passed by Westminster a few moments later. It was of Hugh Oakeley Arnold, the grandson of Dr. Arnold of Rugby, and the close kinsman, by temper as well as by birth, of the great poet who wrote *The Scholar Gipsy*. And I cannot help feeling now that there were qualities in the dead man's character which many of those who met him daily were never permitted to see."

Throughout these weeks in February, during which his health seemed to be gradually improving, his heart and mind were set on one thing—he was quite resolved that when the time came he must and would speak on the Army Estimates; and on March 4 he spoke for the last time in the House of Commons. I tried to dissuade him from an effort that must necessarily be so great, but could not move his determination; he felt impelled to give utterance to the beliefs that he held so strongly. "There are times," he said to me, "when I feel that this thing is 'laid upon me' to do, and I must do it."

His speech followed Mr. Haldane's introduction of the Estimates. The gist of these, his last words to Parliament and to his fellow-countrymen, may be summed up in this sentence:—

"I regard the Army from one point of view alone, and that is the point of view of war. I desire to examine the proposals that have been made to the House from the standpoint of one who asks, What would be the effect in war of all these changes which you are making?" From that standpoint he dwelt especially upon the grave danger that

he believed to be incurred by reliance in time of war on the "Special Reserve." He pointed to the weakness of this force, the major part of it composed of former militiamen, who were only finishing in its ranks their terms of service; to the large number of boys who were simply passing through it as a passage way into the Line; and to the residue. . . . "Boys who respond to the appeal to go into the Special Reserve instead of into the workhouse. These boys enlisted at sixteen or seventeen . . . , never join their regiment . . . , they enlist for general service, and do not know what their regiment is till they are actually summoned to it on the declaration of war. . . . They never see their officers or non-commissioned officers, and never see, except accidentally, their comrades; and these boys, turned adrift at seventeen and a half into the street are to be called out (some of them with the addition of fifteen days' training), and put into the front rank of the British Army in time of war." The prospect was appalling to Oakeley. "One must see the kind of thing that is done in other countries, and the battalions that are being prepared in the great armies of the Continent, and then one must go down and see these boys in the depots to realise what folly it is to suppose that we can do, by magic, what no other nation in the world except ourselves conceives it possible to accomplish. . . . I have another reason for my conviction that this force is not one on which we ought to rely. There is the unanimous opinion stated in public documents, before a great tribunal, by every single one of the right hon. gentleman's military advisers as to what was the minimum term of service necessary to make a soldier. They say it is two years. . . . If he turns to the Report of the Commission he will find the opinion of officer after officer,—some of them his advisers now and some of them his advisers in the past,—every one of them stating in no uncertain manner that two years' training is necessary to make a soldier."

The idea underlying the "Special Reserve" embodied a principle that Oakeley himself had strenuously advocated. "The principle of a short service Army intended to serve in this country in time of peace, and to recruit the regular

Army in time of war." But the methods by which this principle has been carried out in the organisation of the Special Reserve—its period of only six months' training, its dearth of officers, the want of any connection between officers and men—fulfilled none of the conditions which he looked upon as essential in the short service Army that he advocated.

Passing from this question of the Special Reserve, he spoke of the regular Army. He spoke with great earnestness of the reductions which were being made in its numbers, and above all of the reductions of our regular and trained Army officers "at a time when officers are the greatest of the needs of our military organisation."

He spoke briefly on the subject of the Territorial Army, and also about the old and insanitary barracks, long since condemned but left untouched.

And "lastly," he said, "the right hon. gentleman has not provided that most important requirement, the large Reserve which we know we want when the Army is fighting abroad. So far from providing it, he has done everything in his power to diminish the existing Reserve. In another couple of years that Reserve will melt away like snow from a bank in an April shower. If the right hon. gentleman believes that the "Special Reserve" will in any way take its place, I think he will be lamentably disillusioned. I have striven to put before the House what is the net result of the changes that have been made. My conclusion is that where you have saved money, you have laid up a certain and much heavier expenditure in the future. You have destroyed the Militia, and have put in their place a smaller number of men, not a whit more competent, to serve in time of war; you have destroyed portions of the regular Army which were the very flower and pick of it. You have destroyed over 1000 men of the Royal Engineers, 6000 of the Royal Artillery. You have got rid of a battalion of the Guards, with its Reserve; and you have got rid of eight battalions of our best infantry.

"I believe the right hon. gentleman has diverted public attention to a lamentable extent from the true problem of the regular Army; and he has made people believe

that an Army (the Territorial Force) which is attractive and popular is a real Army. It is not; and to that extent he has put off enquiry as to the work that has been done, and made us less likely to be able to meet the enemy in time of war."

Mr. Alfred Lyttelton wrote to me hardly a week later: "I am glad to think that (though I discouraged his speaking in the House of late) I was present on the last occasion when he made so brilliant and impressive a speech; and looked after him and persuaded him to go away to rest after its delivery. I felt it a fearful risk; but he could not avoid taking it. No one could fether that dauntless spirit. No one who has had my opportunities can ever forget the marvellous courage and self-sacrificing love for his country that Arnold was possessed of. His example must ever uphold and strengthen those who try to serve the public."

Oakeley told me when he came home, after making this speech, that he had been sorely afraid that the pain would overmaster him, and prevent his saying the thing that he had felt it imperative to say. "If my pain had got much worse," he said, "I couldn't have done anything at all."

He wrote on March 7 to his sister, Frances Arnold-Forster:—

" . . . You will be glad to hear that I got through my speech without difficulty. After I had once started I had no trouble at all. But I must confess that I was very uncomfortable before I started. I was not well, and I was naturally anxious about my powers, after such a long bout of illness as I have had. However, as I say, all went well. I am none the worse."

How amused he was at the account in a Liberal paper of his "trenchant and vigorous speech, delivered with pluck, vigour, and resource; . . . although to the Liberal mind he seemed altogether on the wrong road, for he attacked Mr. Haldane's Army scheme from a continental point of view; as if this country needed an Army as highly trained as the French or German armies. . . . Liberals," it added, "were irritated by his harping on the deficiencies of an

Army that was never intended to compete with German militarism." "But good Heavens! who is our Army going to compete with; and what is it for if it is not going to fight a continental army?" Oakeley asked.

During these last days he rested a good deal. His great effort had been made, and he was more content. On Saturday, he got up to go out to lunch with his friend General Sir Herbert Plumer, and joined eagerly in the talk with the soldiers who were present. On Monday, we dined with Mr. and Mrs. Colefax; he enjoyed the talk, and was keen and animated, but he came away early, and he seemed to me so tired, that I felt sure that yet another page was being turned, and that another of the pleasures he had enjoyed so much must in future be renounced. When Dr. Huxley saw him on Tuesday he counselled bed and complete rest for three days; and, though Oakeley was very eager to hear the rest of the Army debate, I persuaded him finally and with difficulty to give this up. "You do not realise how I feel about this Army business," he said when I had been dissuading him from further exertion. "Yes," he added gently, "you do realise wonderfully; but who else would?"

He stayed in bed, therefore, on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, and dictated for some time each morning to his faithful secretary, Miss E. Davies, to whose devoted service for seventeen years we owed so much. She wrote from his dictation a letter to the *Standard* on the "Special Reserve"; the first part of which appeared on Thursday the 11th—the second part appearing on the day of his death. He began during these days to write a long letter to Mr. Balfour, and as he wrote it, he read this letter aloud to me. For the rest of those days I seldom left him, but sat with him, reading aloud a good deal to him, and working whilst we talked together.

On Friday morning the 12th, an advance copy of the Navy Estimates came, and he became very much absorbed in reading them. He then dictated for a short time, intending to get up presently to go out to a lunch to be given by Tariff Reformers to Mr. Balfour.

I went to his room at eleven o'clock, and told him that

I was going to meet our sister, Florence Vere O'Brien, who had just arrived from Ireland. "I know my Flo will come and see me to-day," Oakeley said, and gave me messages of his love and loving welcome to his beloved sister. Having an engagement, I told him that I might be out for some hours in the afternoon. He smiled and said that it would be "a fearful waste" if I were away from him for so long, and that if he were well enough he should come and fetch me home. When I was about to leave him and to go out, he said, That there was something he wanted to read to me, and some things also that he was very anxious to tell me. I put off going out, and sat by him whilst he read to me the letter he had been writing to Mr. Balfour and his colleagues, but which was not yet quite finished. He told me that he felt this letter to be the vindication of his policy and work for the Army, and that he wished not only Mr. Balfour, but all his "colleagues in the late Cabinet" to see it. "I think some of them will be much interested," he said, "some of them I know will care very much." This letter, which is given in full at the end of this book, began thus:—

"DEAR MR. BALFOUR—The sands of my Parliamentary life are, alas, running out very fast. Before long I shall no longer have the opportunity of troubling you about current politics, or the desire to do so. This must be my excuse for asking you to read what I have to say about a subject which is very near my heart, and about which I should like you to understand my position before I say good-bye to public life.

"After having served for two years under you—a fact of which I shall always be proud—I am not unnaturally anxious that you should feel that during these two years, despite the great difficulties under which I worked, I was not mistaken in the advice which I tendered to you and my colleagues . . ."

This letter goes on to state the reasons which convinced him that circumstances would inevitably compel the abandonment of the Army policy initiated by Mr. Haldane, and would render inevitable a return to the cardinal principles of the Army policy of 1904-5; and goes on to show that in many

directions, steps taken by Mr. Haldane had already been retraced, and a return to those principles had definitely begun.

The copy of the Naval Estimates was lying by his side ; he had been busy reading it before I went in. He took it up as he talked to me, and went cursorily through its pages. He was in the habit of making careful notes on the Estimates as he read them, but, before writing these down, he often liked to talk them over, and to tell me the substance of what he thought. The gist of what he said would be embodied in the notes that he made afterwards and kept. So in this case, as he turned the pages, he spoke about the different votes as he came to them. He spoke with great gravity about the programme that was laid down (a programme that was afterwards increased by the Government).

I think that he dwelt on it with the more emphasis because of late there had weighed much on his mind the thought of the immense burden of the armaments of the future, of the vast spending capacity of Germany and of the United States, which must be reckoned with in making our calculations of naval strength, and the immensity of the armaments that will be necessary if we act up to our accepted principle of a "two-power standard, plus 10 per cent" as the standard of our Naval strength. He had dwelt on this aspect lately in speaking to me about the naval preparations, but when he saw the Estimates for 1909-10 he was deeply impressed by their inadequacy, and he seemed eagerly anxious to explain to me why he looked upon them as insufficient.

He spoke of the inadequate provision of "Dreadnoughts"—of the need for the provision of more Destroyers ; and he spoke of the abandonment by the Government of the "loan policy," which would have enabled them to hasten the construction of Rosyth, and of the great need that existed for such a harbour and dock as Rosyth upon our eastern coast.

"These," he said, in his eager way, holding up the Estimates, "are fallacious Estimates, as all this Government's Estimates are. They throw all the burden forward, and it will fall with crushing severity in the years to come. The stores have been depleted in the past, and a part of this

money is only making up what they have taken out, and not replaced, since we were in office."

When I left him at last, he gave me messages of affection for his sister. He rose presently to dress, to go out to meet Mr. Balfour. And at the same moment, Dr. Huxley called. We had not expected this kind friend to come on this day, but being near us he was inspired to come in. Oakeley called to him to wait for a moment until he had dressed a little ; and Dr. Huxley waited. Hearing a sound, he thought he had been called. Knocking, he got no answer, and hurried in to find that Oakeley had sunk back on his bed.

Death had come, as he had ever prayed it might come, very quickly, in the midst of life, a life which, up to its last hour, was gladly given to working for the country he loved so much.

Death had seemed very near to him for months and years past ; and he had looked it in the face steadily ; being resolute that it should not affect the manner in which his life was to be lived, nor the work that he would continue to do so long as strength was given to him—nor have power to alter at all his brave and cheerful outlook on the world.

In the letters of those who knew and loved him best—the letters of friends and colleagues, there recurs over and over again the same thought—that this was indeed the way that he would have chosen. With all his powers unimpaired, greatly loving and loved, able to spend himself on his work for his country to the very end, death was not "suffered to take so much as an illusion from him."

.

Mr. Balfour, speaking of him at a great meeting in London some weeks later, said : "He was a man of a higher temper of courage that I have almost ever known. He had a single eye to the great national and imperial needs which are filling now so much of our thoughts. He cheerfully and gladly faced death for many years, conscious that every great effort he made, by speech or otherwise, might end, as it ultimately did end, in his sudden decease ; and yet, with the shadow of death for ever hanging over him, never

did I know a man more absolutely absorbed in a great and unselfish desire to carry out his own public duty, and to see that the great imperial interests of which he was one of the trustees did not suffer while he had anything to do with our national destinies."

THE LETTER TO MR. BALFOUR AND TO HIS COL-
LEAGUES THAT WAS LEFT UNFINISHED, MARCH
12, 1909.

27 HEREFORD SQUARE, S.W.

DEAR MR. BALFOUR—The sands of my Parliamentary life, are, alas, running out very fast. Before long I shall no longer have the opportunity of troubling you about current politics, or the desire to do so. This must be my excuse for asking you to read what I have to say about a subject which is very near my heart, and about which I should like you to understand my position before I say good-bye to public life.

After having served for two years under you—a fact of which I shall always be proud—I am not unnaturally anxious that you should feel that during those two years, despite the great difficulties under which I worked, I was not mistaken in the advice which I tendered to you and to my colleagues.

I do not pretend to think that you can follow my speeches and writings very closely; but, nevertheless, I think you will be aware that I have from the very outset opposed the new Army policy. I have not opposed it in any personal or vindictive spirit. I did my best to co-operate with Haldane, but he would not listen to me; and he had not been three months in office before he almost ostentatiously destroyed that which I had done. What I had done was in accordance with the beliefs which I have cherished all my life, and which I still entertain. I opposed the new policy because I was confident that it could not possibly succeed. I have studied Army matters for thirty years, and in the light of what I had learnt, I felt justified in declaring that the new policy must fail; that it must fail because it was directly opposed to certain main principles, the acceptance of which I was certain was necessary to the existence and welfare of the Army. I went farther. I said in 1906, and I have continued to declare ever since, that not only would the new policy fail, but that the force of circumstances would inevitably compel a return to the old policy.

Now what I should like you to understand is that in regard to

this matter I have been justified by the event. Of the policy as it was unfolded in 1906 not one stone remains upon another. No doubt I was considered by many—by you doubtless among the number—to be a curmudgeon and a prophet of evil, for saying that no part of the scheme was practicable. And yet time has proved that I was right. The main principle of the unification of the Volunteers, Militia, and Yeomanry has been abandoned; the transfer of the Militia to the County Associations has been abandoned; the “Special Contingent,” as originally designed, has disappeared; the drafting of the Militia by companies has gone; the reduction of the pay of the Yeomanry to that of the Regular Cavalry has been given up; the imposition of the £5 fine upon Volunteers failing to complete their term of enlistment is not to be enforced. The promised exclusion of Volunteers who cannot accept six months’ embodiment has been abandoned. The reduction of the Horse and Field Artillery by 67 officers and 3712 men had been abandoned; the original estimate of cost of the Territorial Army has been abandoned. I might continue the list, but it is unnecessary to do so. I will only point out once more that while I received little enough support in my contention that none of the proposals referred to could possibly be effective, time has proved that I was correct.

The scheme of 1906 has been followed by various other schemes, parts of which still hold the field. Of these new schemes I have expressed very much the same opinion as I did of the original proposals; and I will ask you whether after all, there is not already ample evidence that I was justified in my condemnation.

I condemned the reduction of the Horse and Field Artillery, and declared that the policy laid down that 67 officers and nearly 4000 men were to be abolished was wrong and must be reversed. As early as March 1906 I objected to the policy of turning the whole of the Militia Artillery into regular Field Artillery. I contended that if the thing were done at all, it should be limited to the dimensions of the experiment proposed in 1905. I said that on the scale proposed it ought not to succeed, and could not succeed. It has now failed, and the experiment is to be reduced to the exact dimensions advocated by me in 1905.

As you know well, the enlistment of some thousands of regular artillerymen for short service formed an integral part of the scheme of 1905. The plan was denounced in all the moods and tenses, and the present Secretary of State, I might almost say contemptuously, reversed what I had done. But what do we see now? Five thousand artillerymen are to be enlisted on the exact terms I proposed.

I was reviled for suggesting that men enlisted for short service should be retained at home save in time of war. Much eloquence

was expended to prove that these men could never be regarded as soldiers, and that their existence side by side with long-service men was incompatible with the interests of the Service. And yet within the last few days it has been admitted in response to a question, that the whole of the 5000 artillerymen now to be enlisted are to serve upon these very conditions, and are not to go abroad, except in time of war.

I protested, and in this case I admit I had some support, against the reduction of 33 batteries to impotence by placing them upon a two-gun establishment. I contended, as I have done for years past, that so far from having too much artillery, we had too little. That the Indian Army and the Auxiliary Forces both required regular artillery, and that apart from this, casualties in the field might always be expected to reduce the regular artillery. Again, what has happened? The greater part of the condemned batteries are to be resuscitated, and the correspondent of the *Times*, who was foremost in condemning me, is now equally forward in supporting my contention that we require a surplus for the purposes to which I have referred.

I condemned the reduction of the infantry battalions, and also the general reduction of the infantry. Again what has happened? Through the reduction we have lost over 500 trained officers and nearly 2000 N.C.O.'s. Haldane has admitted that all the infantry establishments must be raised, though he proposes to leave the task of raising them to his successors. The military correspondent of the *Times* declares it to be essential that the 10,000 infantry who have been got rid of should be replaced by 12,000 fresh men.

About the Special Reserve I have from the beginning been perfectly consistent. I have said that whereas the principle of a short service home Army, based upon the Militia, was correct, the method of applying it as exemplified in the organisation of the Special Reserve was absolutely wrong. I have declared that the Reserve would be useless if it could be created on such a basis, but that, as a matter of fact, it could not possibly come into existence on the lines laid down. Word for word, and letter for letter, I have been justified. I saw that you accepted Haldane's correction of your criticism with regard to the Reserve. You could not do otherwise. But you were perfectly correct. The Reserve has broken down utterly, and the figures that have been given to Parliament and the country are altogether misleading. The artillery portion of the Reserve was to consist of 14,500 men. It is now to be reduced to 6000 men, this part of the scheme being an admitted failure. The Army Service contingent was to be 1000 rank and file; its actual strength is 50. The infantry was to number 58,588; it actually numbers 55,301. But how is this figure arrived at? It includes 37,799 men who are simply the remains of the old Militia

serving on to finish their term. It includes also 11,055 men who are still serving at the depots, and of whom not 20 per cent will ever go to the Reserve at all. The total number actually discharged at the conclusion of their training is 7681. But, as we have been since informed, a large number of these have since gone on to the Army, and are, therefore, wrongly included in the Special Reserve. Of the little remnant, the greater number are boys who are notoriously unfit for the Army, or who, being under standard, remain in the Reserve until they have added on the necessary inches. Such is the real composition of this force. But no figures, and no words that I can use, will give you a conception what the force, as I have seen it, really is. The idea of pitting these children against the trained troops of a European Army is as foolish as it is wicked.

From the very outset I have declared that no officers would or could be obtained for the Special Reserve. I have been proved only too sorrowfully right. For an establishment of 80,000 men exactly 100 officers have been obtained. Counting in all the surviving Militia officers, there is already a deficiency of 1573 lieutenants on an establishment of 1907, of 647 second lieutenants on an establishment of 1073. The sergeants, I believe, are over 2000 short. Of the new officers 50 have been obtained for the infantry. Of these 32 are officially stated to have joined merely for the purpose of getting into the Army by a short cut, leaving 18 officers for the whole of the 58,588 infantry. I think you will admit that the destructive part of my criticism of the Special Reserve has not been very wide of the mark. Perhaps you may think this some reason for accepting my constructive view. This was embodied in the policy of 1905. I have always declared that in order to make the Special Reserve effective, the establishment of the units must be increased and the length of service extended. In other words, that the short-service battalions so ruthlessly destroyed in 1906 must be re-created. You will see that this will be done.

I did my best to convince you and my colleagues in the Cabinet that concurrent enlistment for long and short service was not only the correct solution of our problem from the military point of view, but also from the financial point of view. You may perhaps have observed that Haldane, having now adopted the system on military grounds, has specially pointed out in his Memorandum that it is not only the best, but the cheapest.

And while I am on finance, I should like to point out that here, too, the advice I ventured to give was correct. I said that, without destroying units, the cost of the regular Army under the Cardwell system could not be diminished. It has only been diminished by destroying nine units and getting rid of 20,000 men.

The Secretary of State has officially declared that the cost of the Army in 1905 was less than the Army Estimates for 1908-9. You have doubtless noted that the Army Estimates for this year are, in fact, higher than those for 1908-9.

I have steadily maintained that the estimates for the Territorial Army were illusory and must be greatly increased. They have already been increased by half a million, and the real cost has not yet been touched.

With regard to barrack building and loan expenditure, I have pointed out every session that the House of Commons was being misled, that loan expenditure was not being transferred to the votes, but that work was simply being left undone. We have now an official declaration of the correctness of this statement. Haldane has announced that a great scheme of barrack building has been elaborated, and this year the paltry sum of £64,000 is taken for new barracks. The cost of barracks, of ranges, of manœuvre grounds is all being thrown forward on to future years, as you will eventually find out.

I must not forget the question of the cavalry. Presuming upon the ignorance and apathy of the House of Commons, the Secretary of State declared the other day that, as a result of much profound thought, and as the outcome of the deliberations of a Special Committee, it had been decided to create six large depots for the cavalry, to abandon the system of linking, and to send men direct from the depots to their regiments. The Secretary of State did not mention that this policy was simply a return to the policy of 1905, which he had deliberately arrested. There lies before me a passage taken from my book, *The Army in 1906*, written in March of that year. The passage runs as follows :—

[*Letter ends.*]

TITLES OF BOOKS AND OF THE PRINCIPAL ARTICLES CONTRIBUTED BY H. O. ARNOLD- FORSTER TO REVIEWS, 1881 TO 1909 ¹

- 1881. A Civilian's Answer to Sir Garnet Wolseley (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1881. The Gladstone Government and Ireland (*North American Review*).
- 1882. *The Truth about the Land League*.
- 1883. The Balkhan Provinces in 1883 (*Contemporary Review*).
- 1883. Outcast London (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1883. The Dwellings of the Poor (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1883. Our Position as a Naval Power (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1883. The Liberal Idea in the Colonies (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1884. *What to do and how to do it*. (A Manual of the Law affecting Housing and Sanitary Conditions of Londoners).
- 1884. The People *versus* their Naval Officials (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1885. England on the Admiralty (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1886. Shall we desert the Loyalists? (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1886. *The Citizen Reader*. Cassell & Co.
- 1886. Our Superstition about Constantinople (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1886. Pamphlets published by the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union and Pamphlets published by the Imperial Federation League.
- 1888. *Laws of Everyday Life*. Cassell & Co.
- 1888. Catalogue of the Educational Exhibits sent from England to the Melbourne Exhibition.
- 1888. How to Solve the Irish Land Question (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1888. In a Conning Tower (*Murray's Magazine*). Afterwards published by Cassell & Co.
- 1888. *Our Estates in South Africa*. Pamphlet.
- 1889. An English View of Irish Secession (*Political Science Quarterly*).
- 1891. How to Utilise the Naval Volunteers (*Nineteenth Century*).

¹ Letters and articles contributed to newspapers are not included in this list, nor the contributions which he so often wrote for the Imperial Federation League, and for the political associations in which he was interested.

- 1891. *This World of Ours.* Cassell & Co.
- 1893. *Things New and Old.* English History Readers in seven volumes. Cassell & Co.
- 1894. Questions in the House on Naval Matters (*National Review*).
- 1894. Gibraltar, an Offer and a Refusal.
- 1895. The Emperor's new Clothes (*National Review*).
- 1896. Sisyphus in Ireland.
- 1897. New French Naval Programme (*Cosmopolis*).
- 1897. *History of England.*
- 1898. A Daniel come to Judgment (*National Review*).
- 1898. The Army and the Government's Opportunity (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1898. The Truth about the Home Battalions (*United Service Magazine*).
- 1899. *The Coming of the Kilogram* (on the metrical system). Cassell.
- 1900. *Our Great City.* Cassell & Co.
- 1900. The War Office and the War (*National Review*).
- 1900. Insufficient Proposals of the War Office (*Nineteenth Century*).
- 1900. *The War Office, the Army, and the Empire.* Cassell.
- 1900. Report of the South African Land Settlement Commission.
- 1903. *The Case for Enquiry* (a pamphlet on our fiscal system).
- 1907. *The Army in 1906.* John Murray.
- 1907. The Political Situation (*National Review*).
- 1908. *English Socialism of To-day.* Smith, Elder & Co.
- 1909. *Military Needs and Military Policy.* Smith, Elder & Co.

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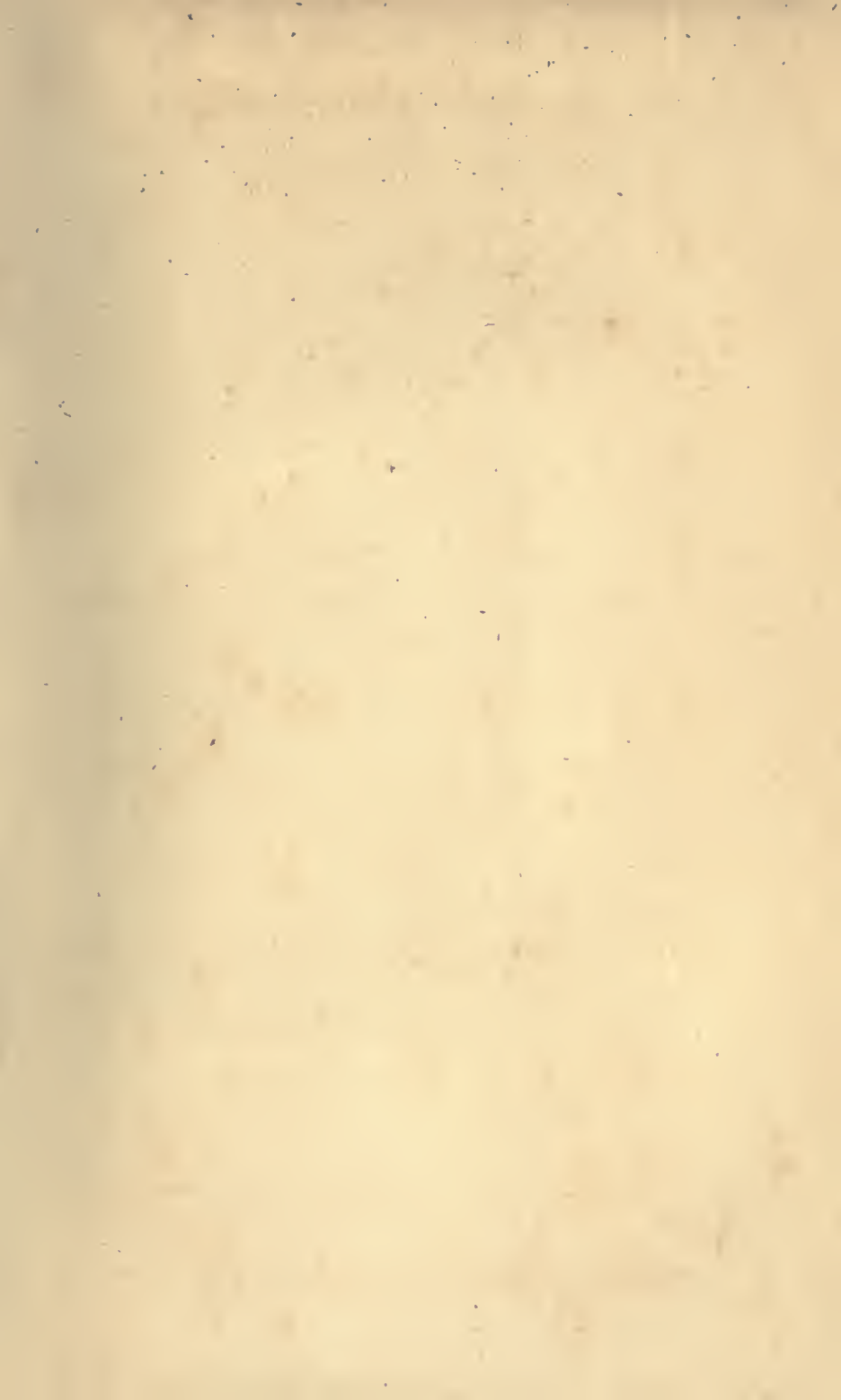
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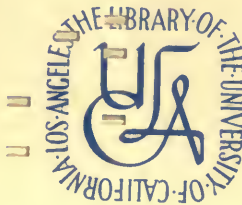
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